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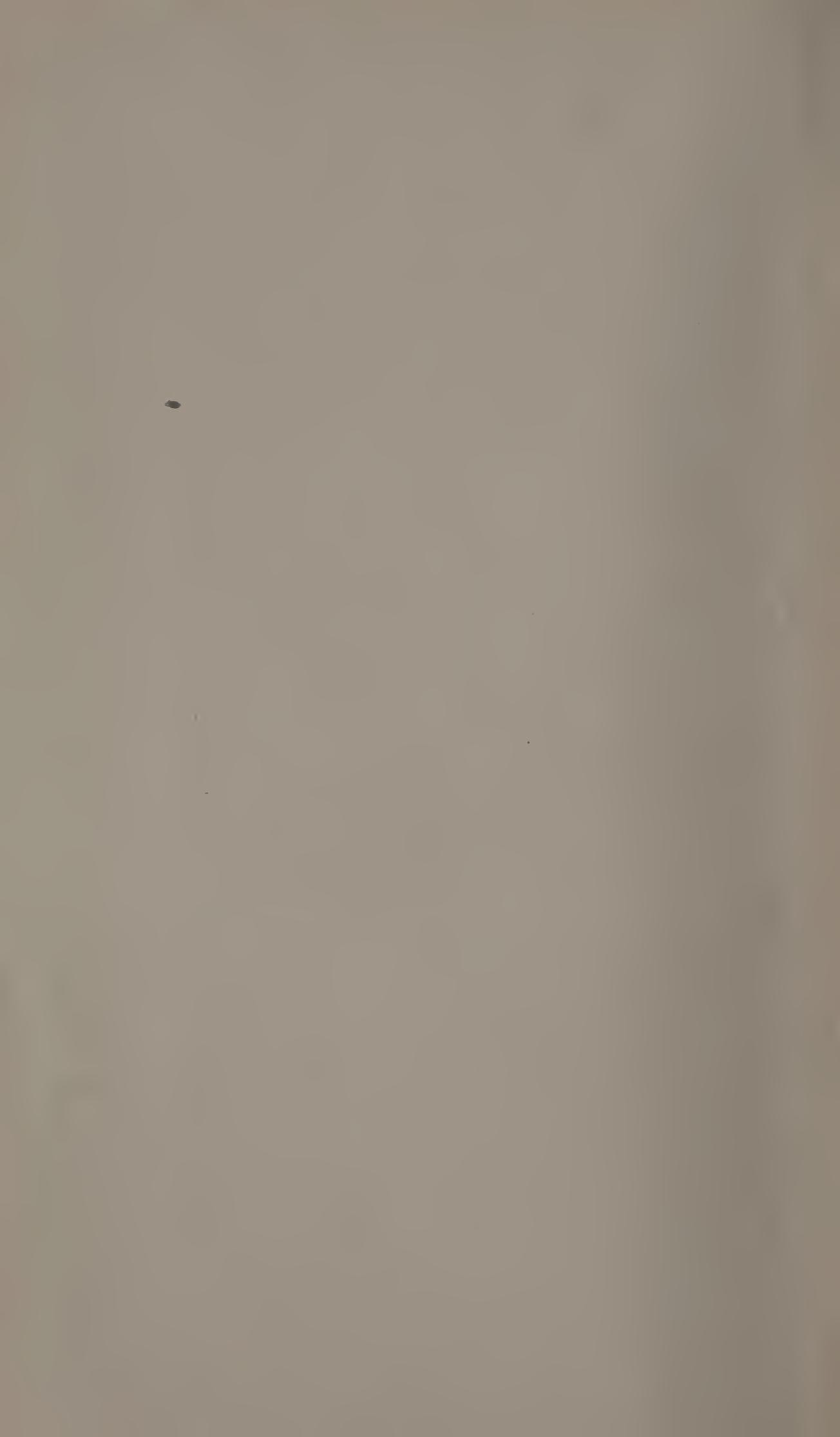
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ONE OF FOUR

By

James L. Roberts ✓

Author of

“The Itinerant’s Daughter.”

1924

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To the older sister

Ida May

who chose to remain with
the scenes of this home of
our childhood this book is
affectionately dedicated.

Chapter	Page
I. Surroundings And Home.	7
II. Morning Shadows.	19
III. Lasting Impressions.	30
IV. Rumors Of Weddings.	43
V. The Old Mill.	49
VI. Pleasure And Profit.	60
VII. Modes Of Travel.	79
VIII. Dark Days.	87
XI. Rapid Changes.	95
X. Conflicting Plans	101
XI. Other Scenes.	113
XII. Religion In The Home.	120
XIII. Baffled.	125
XIV. Ups And Downs	131
XV. Evening Shades.	143

PREFACE

This volume contains a record of events that transpired in the life of a Missouri family, of which the author was a member, and was written primarily for the perusal and pleasure of those whose names are mentioned in it.

If it falls into the hands of any other who may read it we trust such reader will regard it as only a simple narrative of plain facts, and find pleasure in reading it, not because the author claims for it any literary merit, nor had any thought that it would, in any measure, satisfy a taste for such, but only because it suggests some ideas and conditions of life that are familiar to all, exposes some of the follies of youth, recalls some humorous instances in life and takes one, in thought, through those trying times in life when the soul is made better by those events, so little understood, that bring us down, in deep

sorrow, to that condition in which we can recognize the divine hand and feel the gentle touch of his love as he lifts us to hope for and realize better things.

If this little volume shall only make a small contribution to this end the purpose of its mission will be accomplished.

The Author.

5

ONE OF FOUR

CHAPTER I

SURROUNDINGS AND HOME

As we look in on the scene we see nothing that is at all unusual in the life of an American home.

If the scene that we are to look upon be such as belongs to the life of an American city, we expect, of course, to see long rows of houses lining the street on each side as far as the hill-top in at least four directions; the smoke of many factories and institutions as it curves from the smoke-stacks, rises above the city, then, dissolving, spreads out over the city as if formed by a designer for the express purpose of protecting the inhabitants of the city from the burning rays of the mid-day sun; the happy, hopeful tread of many children, as laden with tablets and books, they make their way to the institutions of learning

ONE OF FOUR

where another day of mental exercise awaits them; the stream of laborers as they come from the houses in the long row, each with a box or lucket in hand, joining a companion in tread and moving with the crowd, makes his way to the shop; and the never-ceasing movement of conveyances as they glitter with their shining polish and roll by with their contents of joyous and sad, rich and poor, over-rated and under-rated and all classes to their various points of destination; and hear, above the rumble of wagons, carts, electric cars and automobiles, the shouts of youthful vendors calling and vieing with the rumble to secure a share of the attention of the public and fix it on his wares or on himself; the screaming of the steam engine as it makes the curve and begins to straighten its train of cars in preparation for unloading, loading, switching and connecting for another run; the voices of men, women and children, as the "voice of many waters" as they exchange greetings, sound warnings and

SURROUNDINGS AND HOME

continue the conversations that were begun in the distant indistinguishable clatter and now come along with the wind, in its course, as it sweeps on down the street, and the last call of the departing as they glance and call back to leave one more word of instruction for the maid on the steps, and add one more sound to the all-too-many that only confuse and disturb contemplation.

If the scene be such as belongs to the life of a rural community in America, in that section known as central Missouri, those who are familiar with these scenes would expect, of course, to see a lane inclosed on each side by a fence of some kind, and with a surface of yellow clay, or dark heavy loam, or a mixture of these, and located on one side or the other perhaps a mile or so apart; farm houses the size and appearance of which would, in a large measure, indicate the degree of prosperity of the owner; a school or church every four or five miles

ONE - OF - FOUR

the appearance of which would, in a large measure, indicate the degree of interest taken by the community in education and religion ; and as we look over the forests we would expect to see tall trees of many kinds, and on the praries all the rolling beauties that mark the landscape of that section. If it is prairie, then the still quietness of its rolling beauty would fill the soul with a great calm. If forests, then all the beauties of its charmed and charming life would stand out before us as a challenge to every appreciative sense of our being ; only the quarrel of the squirrel in the tree-top, reminding the intruder that this forest is in reserve, to embarrass our entrance and stay as we witness the silent opening of all the buds of spring-time as they unfold and spread their leaves as so many glad hands ready and waiting to break from our tired forms the force of the summer sun and give us freely of the dark cool shade in which we may lie down, rest and dream of fairy lands, and

SURROUNDINGS AND HOME

hear the sweet song of the bird as, from sunshine to shadow, he goes with the speed of light, to scatter in the sunshine and among the shadows the sweet expression of his trembling joy that he would share freely with all the world.

Such are the scenes amid which the story of this home life begins. It is that of the home life of a Missouri family established in a farm-house, newly built, a two-story frame of seven rooms, on the line of a country road, near a school-house and a number of splendid homes where neighbors and relatives lived and enjoyed the life of one of those splendid country communities, so common in the United States of America and so well known to one who is a native of central Missouri and lived there during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

The family with whom we are to associate now consisted of a young man about thirty years of age, of strong physique and the picture of health, his wife, a rather

ONE OF FOUR

delicate little woman, with little promise of a long life, having contracted that much dreaded malady known as tuberculosis that has claimed, for an early closing of life, so many of the sons and daughters of our fair land, and four children, two girls and two boys, names and ages as follows. May 7, William 5, James 3, and Ellen 1. The first-born infant, unknown to the four children living, died in early infancy; even before the second child was born.

In the narrative we may alternate and speak, frequently, of the older boy as J. W. and of the younger boy as Jim.

We will give the story in brief. This may prove to be very gratifying to those to whom much of it may be of little interest; But to the writer, whose identity may be traced back to the boy known as Jim, this narrative has much that is of interest, as it recalls much of the past in real life.

And now, looking back over a lapse of

many years, at the movements, childish pranks and blunders of the four, the writer may, at times, almost fail to recognize his identity in the bunch, or hesitate to acknowledge it, and be disposed to speak of each of the four in the third person. If this manner obtains, in a measure, the reader will remember that we now ask to be allowed to reserve that privilege.

In my fancy, I am sitting now in the front door of this home looking to the east over the green mounds that stand up before me, on each side of the walk, like so many sentinels stationed there to keep watch, day and night, for the visitor who may need their assistance in finding the entrance to the house.

Beyond these I see a string of stick-horses hitched to the fence, down by the road, each waiting its turn to be exercised in a race, or put on exhibition, as the owner may desire or have it prepared for.

Encircling these mounds, and twice

ONE OF FOUR

crossing the walk, I see, in dim outline, a track, formed by bare feet, in the low pressed grass where the stick-horses have made their rounds with their riders, whose feet touched the ground and, with the combined weight of horses and riders, formed the track. In these marks I have before me a vision of happy days of pleasure and rest that might be raised by a look, in any direction, from any door of this once happy home.

The mounds served as rests where we could stop, for a moment, to rest the tired limbs of our contending steeds, as we reclined against the cool earthen surface, taking all of the rest to ourselves and passing the imaginary rest to the imaginary weariness of the horses, watching the passer-by who comes along, only once in a great while, or the plough-man in the field across the way, as he moves slowly across the corn field, rolling the dirt to or from the tiny stalks of corn, stopping every

few steps to lift, from a helpless and almost crushed hill of the young corn, a clod that falls upon it, or the rolling clouds as they roll up their snowy whiteness and build, for our entertainment, castles and mountains, sending up a cloud of smoke from one and covering the other with a sheet of snow, then dissolving all into a blend of floating hues and diffusing colors.

Then, when tired of the scenery and the steeds were rested and ready, we would come out and line them up for another race; After which we would stall them again, while other scenes and games would engage us.

As we look back, through the years, to the time of our childhood and to a period of the same in which we saw objects at close range and moved with short and quick steps, at this long range, we find it quite difficult to measure objects and distances correctly.

When I look now at the lawn, where

ONE OF FOUR

we romped and played, when we were children, and find that it is only about one hundred feet across it, I can hardly realize that it is the same place where we had our large "mile race track" for testing the style and speed of our fine "stick horses", that we put through such violent exercise as they made the rounds and came in on the home stretch foaming and panting; which foaming and panting effected only the imagination and person of the rider.

Then when I look for the rows of mounds, on each side of the walk, reaching from the house to the road—four in a row, they are gone; The lawn is level; And I miss those mounds of beauty that stood there, a half globe, covered with grass, close-cut and green; And I almost wonder how they ever stood, so many, so large and so far apart, in the short stretch that reaches from the house to the road.

And now I am impressed with the fact

SURROUNDINGS AND HOME

that, at that period of our lives, we were looking from small proportions, taking short, quick steps and comparing the proportions of our bodies with that of these objects and distances with which we were dealing. Of course, the circumstances of this observation, comparison and change have gone with the past.

As we measure objects and distances now the measurements that we get must stand. We have now reached the limit of possibilities for growth, or any great extension of our corporal proportions, and are able to see ourselves in proportions that are established and our surroundings as they really are; And nothing but a passing shadow can now change the aspect of these things in life.

And whether we see these objects and people, with which we have to deal now, in the dark shadow or in the clear sunlight, in their physical proportions, they are very much the same.

But I must not forget that with this

ONE OF FOUR

pen, I am to trace this little family through many years and that I must not linger. I must arise and go. I can not remain on the door step and look upon the scenes that glow before me in the sun-light. They are full of beauty; They give rise to visions of pleasure; and I would fain linger with them; But I see a shadow coming across the way; They are now passing under it; And, in truth to them, love and duty leads me on,

CHAPTER II

MORNING SHADOWS

When we attempt to recall and assemble, for record, the events of those days that seem so far away, we find it necessary to go back, in our thought, into a dim distance and shadowy ways.

There are a few events—whether we really recall them, or recall what was only an account of them, we are not quite sure—that stand out to themselves and are seen over the trend of life like the hill-tops that rise before us when we glance over the surface of a stretch of country and wave before us like the rising and falling of our spirits that has marked, so well, our pilgrimage here. Some of these events seem to lift themselves so far above the others that they are seen in a clearer light, even though they are at a greater distance from the present. Doubtless this is due to the fact that more is made of them.

From what I remember, or have been told—I am not quite sure which—

ONE OF FOUR

I recall that preparations were made for this family to take a trip, across the country, to Eureka Springs, Arkansas, hoping that the health of the mother might be benefitted. This was, for that time, a long journey; And, for sake of health, as much as for any other consideration, it was decided that we should make the journey in a traveler's wagon, that the family—and especially the mother, for whose benefit the trip was made—might have the advantage of the drive across the open country and the wholesome atmosphere of the mountains.

The time for beginning the drive came; and, so far as I have been informed, all went very well until we came to the Missouri river and the ferry boat glided up to the bank to take us in.

At this juncture all continued to go well but James, who succeeded in breaking loose from those who would restrain him and in finding an inviting

path-way that led away from the river, which path-way he took and proceeded to heat with his flying heels and as much friction as his short and quick steps could produce.

He had not gone far, however, when Bart (the colored boy), with his swift movement and longer steps, overtook him and brought him back to the boat, regardless of his vigorous protest against all movements to commit his tiny body and failing spirits to the mercy of the rolling deep through the medium of a "bucking" ferry boat.

Notwithstanding all of his pleas and protests, James was forced to take his chances with the others. As the boat bowed, turned and began to plow its way through the water, seeing the waves boating high against the side of the craft, James declared it was "bucking" and that, with great difficulty, he was holding on.

When the land finally struck the

ONE OF FOUR

side of the boat, the gate was lowered and the opportunity to make connection with the earth was afforded again, James went up the bank with all the alacrity and ease that a channel cat or loose lobster could come down it, then, when at a safe distance, paused to wring himself and count the other members of the party to see how many were fortunate enough to land.

The journey through the Ozarks was a real pleasure; And the days and nights were filled with new, strange and interesting sounds and scenes. As we passed along the roads through the woods, in the sparcely settled country, the owls that, at night, held high carnival in the otherwise lonely darkness, would drop from a tree top, cross the road and disappear in the density of the woods before one could draw a gun. Squirrels were numerous and made bold to bark at us as we passed their haunts.

Upon one occasion we had the

MORNING SHADOWS

pleasure of seeing what was rarely seen in central Missouri, at that time, and now, I believe, not at all. As we came to a little ravine, in the deep of the forest, our attention by a rustling in the leaves and the sudden halting of the team, that first noticed the phenomenon, to a large deer that was just about to disappear in the brush with a little fawn at its side. The deer had come, with her fawn, to the pool by the side of the road for a drink, and, surprised by the appearance and approach of the strange visitors, had decided to give these strangers all of the road and seek a place of safety.

Whether it was due to consideration for the little one, its relation to and dependence upon the mother, or to simple excitement, I do not know; But, at any rate, the father made no attempt to secure and lift the gun; only dropping the lines and pointing the finger, which was not loaded at all, toward the

ONE OF FOUR

excited quadrupeds and , with considerable show of excitement , calling the attention of the other members of the party to the vanishing wonder .

This much I recall only like recalling a dream ; And I am left to wonder if I remember any event of this journey or only the accounts of them that have been given to me by others .

One thing I know , The result was not as we hoped for ; And we returned to our Missouri home to face the inevitable .

No record of events in a life would be complete without an account of those , so familiar and sad , that bring depressions and and clouds that , at times , threaten to almost spoil the day and extinguish the light .

And yet , while the lowering shadows of the early morning portend a day of groping in the gloom , a kindly breeze will sometimes arise and carry them away , passing them on to other winds whose

moan we never hear ; And even before we can adjust ourselves to the gloom, the smiling sun looks out upon us and leads the way to all the joys of the noon-tide. And while, at times, depression and sorrow come to all, and to many in the early morning of youth, there is about the child a shield of providence that mitigates in favor of the tender years. It is manifest in their inability to readily adjust themselves to gloom and in their ability to be the first to see the returning light.

To this kind providence we are indebted for so much of the pleasure that we find in retrospection, that we are disposed to draw on it, continually, for the future,

So as I undertake to make a record of events that stand out before me as worthy of mention in the record of life, seeing them from my present stand point, as I look with a feeling of mingled pride and regret to the past and of hope

ONE OF FOUR

to the future, I feel as if I were standing between two great realities.

While many events that have transpired have left on my mind an indelible impression, and now come before me as vivid, even, as present day events.

So the future, as I try to see and plan it, is, to my mind, just as real as the past, and comes before me with the same claim upon my thoughts. And, as I look and think, one is just as real as the other. And is it not fitting that it should be so? Surely we are under no less obligation to regard and plan for the future than we are to regard and reflect upon the past.

If I should attempt to follow the trend of my thought back to the first events that I can now recall, I would find myself in a vague maze of thought where nothing is very clear or definite.

And if, in this misty past, I should go, in thought, to the limit of my memory, I think I would find myself a little

MORNING SHADOWS

boy under three years of age sitting on the floor at the feet of his mother, trying to put his foot into a new shoe and, to accomplish it, trying to follow the directions given by that mother whose sweet and kindly face fades out there and is never seen again in any other event of his life, and whose love and care was so longed for and so much needed in the many months and years that followed.

The next scene that I recall and which seems to be just as far back in the mazy distance, and in a cloud even more dense, is that of a father's form standing in the door-way, as he calls to the little ones to break to them the sad news that mother had passed away and bid them come in to the scene that was, for him, the saddest possible; but, to the motherless little ones, so little understood that it is all lost to memory.

Following the call to come into the house, the veil seems to fall. And none

ONE OF FOUR

of the circumstances of the closing scene or of the preparations for the last farewell can now be recalled. And can we not see, in this drawing of the veil, the hand of God put forth to shut out from memory all but the sweet face of a mother as she bends, in love and tenderness, over the difficulties of her little child to make the last and only impression of her life upon the mind of the child who is to go through life and never know a mother's love and care. At any rate it was so, and we passed on through the melancholy days that followed.

The loneliness of a child that has been deprived of a mother's love and care is not known to any one who is in a state of mind and condition of life to realize, fully, what it means.

The small child that needs such care most is too young to realize it; And when he arrives at years of maturity the memory fails to reach far enough

MORNING SHADOWS

29

back to recall the sadness and loneliness of those days.

The father, realizing this, seeing the sad state in the neglected appearance of so many features of the home keeping and in so many unfinished tasks, with no promise beyond the present state, and reading between the lines, so well marked on sad faces, and in the deep blue of so many little eyes that were turned on him, the emotions that were holding and swaying with powers unseen and, to others, unknown, resolved to see that some one who really cared should come to his assistance and help to dry the deep blue of those appealing eyes and gladden the hearts of those who were now looking for help to him alone, and who were now so ready to respond to the love and care that they so much needed. And all were delighted when it was announced that Aunt Clara, father's unmarried sister, was to come and take charge as governess for the children.

CHAPTER III

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Until Aunt Clara could arrange to come, the older sister, May, though only seven years of age, assumed, in a measure, the duties that belong to a house keeper, and, with the assistance of "Aunt Nicie" (the old negro woman), did the best she could to regulate affairs and keep order in the home. In this capacity, May was performing with becoming grace, but not without difficulties. The younger children were not, at all times, disposed to make the work and management easy for her; But even went so far as to resent her assuming these duties when she undertook to do for them the little things, so necessary, and that would have been neglected if she had failed to do them.

I must now confess that some of these after-duty troubles were due to the conduct of Jim.

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

One fair morning, after James had made a vigorous protest against being so roughly handled by an elder sister, who sought what would be, for her, the most convenient and expeditious method by which she might separate the boy and the dust as she attempted to put him through a bath and prepare him for a respectable appearance at the breakfast table, and was about to fail, when she had become thoroughly convinced that her efforts alone would not avail, the father was called to the scene and Jim awoke to a sense of his folly and the vanity of protest only when a limb from a near-by peach tree seemed bent on sticking to him, even closer than a sister, who had now repaired to a safe distance and was looking on with a feeling more of pity than satisfaction.

So helpful did this little performance prove to be, both to Jim in the regulation of his moral conduct, and to May in the accomplishment of her purpose,

ONE OF FOUR

that Jim was soon at the table looking as clear and bright as the morning ; a wiser and better boy , and with an impression on his mind that has remained to this day .

The experience of this morning went very far in impressing Jim with the wisdom of coming to complete submission to the will of those who know best , and in preparing him for the kindly advice of Aunt Clara , who arrived after many days of waiting , during which the promise of her coming was many times renewed , and plans for the respectful obedience of all younger members of the family to her will were suggested , well formed , announced and unanimously adopted .

So much was Jim impressed with this agreement and the process by which he was prepared for it , that he began to feel that it would neither be becoming nor wise for him to enter any protest against his preparation for any meal

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

that might be prepared for him, nor against devouring, with all relish possible, any article of food that "Auntie" might suggest or have put to his plate.

So with perfect submission, he allowed himself to be lifted into a high chair and helped to a bowl of hash seasoned with onions. Now Jim had no objections to offer to "hash" and has never since entertained any objection to it, as a dish. In fact, from the frequent use that he has made of it in late years, both in the pulpit and out, one might infer that he has a peculiar and special liking for it, as a dish, and great faith in it, as truth twice told.

But his objection to the seasoning has never since been held as a secret.

He has never felt perfectly safe in making an attempt to hold his objections to onions a secret since, at that time, he so utterly and ignominiously failed. He was too young to know the limit of his powers and recognize the

OPEN OF FOUR

impossible ; And in humble compliance with the expressed desire of his aunt Clara , made up his mind to eat the hash , seasoning and all , with all the relish possible , not-with-standing his extreme aversion to the flavor of the dish and his serious doubts concerning his ability in the premises . The seasoning went straight to his stomach , and just as promptly returned . It was all so sudden and so impressive that now , after many years , the memory of the event is so vivid and brings it before me as real and present that to indulge it produces a sensation very much the same as that experienced on that eventful morning .

A child 's need of these impressive experiences and lessons is so great and urgent that kind fate will sometimes arouse one from slumber , even in the night time , for one extra .

This , of course , will often prevent taking more rest than is necessary for the

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

body of the sleeper at the cost of too much loss from the enlargement of the life and the developement of the mind.

This kind fate, when arousing one in the night time, is not always careful to furnish a light by which we may see the dangers, nor to lead us to joyous experiences. But many times the problem that we face is to locate, in the dark, not only the objects that insist upon presenting themselves to us before we are ready to meet them, dealing harshly with us, but also even ourselves.

The truth of all of this was made manifest to Jim in the very next lesson.

Nice enough to be cared for and have the important lessons of life impressed upon you, to be tucked in bed with a good-night kiss and assured that "Auntie" is to be near you through all the long hours of the night; but there were other desires and needs just as great as these.

"Auntie" would fall asleep and forget,

ONE OF FOUR

But Jim could not forget that now, even while others are asleep, he must have a drink. And now comes the laborious and exhausting task of arousing "Auntie" to a realization of the condition, of the great and urgent need and of her responsibility in the matter.

When it finally dawned upon "Auntie" that she was still in a world of troubles, she arose to go down stairs, with Jim, for the much needed and greatly desired refreshment.

As the electric system was not, at that time, a convenience in the country, the only button that one could touch with any desirable effect was the one to make the robe secure while they fought away the darkness, some of which they found to be only imaginary, as they hunted for the stairway and descended.

With his hand on the hand of Aunt Clara and his foot on the same step with her Jim felt somewhat secure; But when they made the curve, where there was

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

for Aunt Clara a long step and for Jim a short one, they reversed the order; Aunt Clara stepped short and did not go down as she intended, and Jim stepped long and, loosing his hold on Aunt Clara's hand, went down many more steps and far more rapidly than he intended. At this rapid gait he reached the water bucket at the foot of the stairs much sooner than he intended, and when he was picked up had more water than he desired, another dreadful bath and a robe full of good cool water to take back to bed. At any rate that was the way it impressed him and he never forgot it.

One can scarcely believe that a night will draw itself out into two or three years, but as we retire again and wait for the return of day it seems that this night must have continued to hold its shadows down upon us for many months.

We recall no other event, as successive, until we see Jim, who must now be

ONE OF FOUR

near five or six years of age following the tracks of his father in the deep snow as they make their way down to the new barn, endeavoring to reach the full length of his father's steps which have been made to accommodate his short reach; and then again with J. W. on top of a tall corn pen throwing corn to the hogs, one ear at a time, and with great glee watching the pigs chase one another in their contest for possession of what, so far as they know, might be the last ear thrown, and continuing this until the pigs would no longer give chase and even had a supply on the ground sufficient for another feed—and how much more they might have had if the father had not appeared on the scene to put an end to the sport, it would be difficult to say.

Here memory fails and we loose sight of Jim until we see him, on a fine October morning, drawing on a pair of boots that are ornamented with red tops

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

and brass toes, in preparation for his first day at school. This eventful day impressed him, as it has impressed many others, as one of the great days of life.

He was now permitted to look not only at his own new book, with its strange disfigurements, but also at many strange marks and figures formed on the board by others, and to hear the "cross-wise" looking teacher announce many new and strange rules. He was looking too, for the first time, upon a group organized for a definite purpose in school work, which purpose he supposed was to prepare the boys and girls to appreciate the freedom of the play ground as they were put through a season of testing in which they could only cast shy glances, with one eye, keeping the other always on the teacher to permit an occasional loosening of the elbow to accommodate the boy immediately in front by laying low the bunch of hair that insisted upon standing upon end on the top of his head, or

ONE OF FOUR

the releasing of a paper wad that was no longer needed by the one who held it and who seemed confident that he could so direct it that it would serve a purpose at the other side of the room.

These maneuvers were all new to Jim and to watch them and study the artful tricks of the more daring ones consumed most of his time except when occupied by an occasional glance at his new book when the eyes of the teacher would turn his way.

To this round of arts, pleasures and duties Jim soon became well accustomed and, in time, was recognized as an average scholar at Ellis school. At least it was acknowledged that he easily stood "fifty fifty" with Cuddy, Chuck-a-luck and Breeches, in hop scotch, town ball, and deportment; notwithstanding the fact that, several times, he narrowly escaped being suspended in the air, with a string looped around his ear and attached to the chandelier, by coming back to

LASTING IMPRESSIONS

consciousness just as the teacher drew up on the string to lift his sleeping form from the bench.

Later on in school life he passed to that experience, so common with the average boy, in which his glances were most all cast in the same direction, reaching, most every time, the same objective. The reader will readily understand when we explain that, of all these shy glances, Bettie was the willing victim. He found in her so many of those charms and fine graces that his sense of appreciation and evident interest not only marked him as normal and made him ridiculous, but doubtless also, in a large measure, contributed to his failure as a speller and his "turning down" in the class until there arose a continual contest between him and his boy chum, who is now a Philadelphia lawyer, for the place second from foot.

How long this contest continued, and the same circumstance contributed to his

ONE OF FOUR

part in it, we do not know. But we are led to believe that Jim must have been a fairly average student in other branches as his general average seemed to keep pace very well with others of his difficulties, age and intelligence.

Then out of charitable consideration as well as in self defense, we are disposed to contend that spelling is naturally a very difficult art for some people, even of good average intelligence; that the power to spell well and easily, is a gift, and is not to be acquired by some, even after much experience and hard study.

If this contention has any support beyond the testimony of this print, we are not to infer that the struggle of Jim, for even second place from foot, was due to any lack of average intelligence.

RUMORS OF WEDDINGS

Let no one think that all rumors that are passed about in society pass over the heads of children of few years, that the nature of a rumor can not disturb them, that its passing is not a matter that is even likely to engage their consciousness, or that they have no conception of the natural order of life or of the effect such order may have on them.

If we allow our thoughts to stray like this some day we will find our selves face to face with a little fellow who will have a grasp of things that will be, to us, surprising and astonishing, if not even embarrassing.

The whispered words concerning the Doctor's attentions to Aunt Clara struck the drums of little ears with the same force with which they struck those of larger ones; And the matter of the possibility of Aunt Clara's oversight coming to a speedy termination was one often discussed in small groups of little folks, with much speculation as to what could

ONE OF FOUR

be done in such event to , in any measure , fill the place in the home and in the hearts of the little ones as Aunt Clara had filled it , was often indulged .

In course of time it came to the ears of the children that the father , in whom they had the utmost confidence as one who could not make a serious mistake when using his best judgement , and who would never fail to exercise his very best judgement in deciding questions of great moment , realizing too that Aunt Clara might decide that she could not remain in the home and care for the children longer , and that this decision may be announced just any time and without much warning (which did occur , as is the usual order in the life of a young lady of fine qualities whose presence will both grace and brighten the life of any home) remembering the promise made to the mother that he would endeavor to keep the children together

RUMORS OF WEDDINGS

and with him, in order to hold the family together and do his best for them, had just about decided to bring into the home-life a stepmother for his children.

To them this was an idea entirely new.

They had never heard of such an innovation as this. While they had always exercised the utmost confidence in their father and in his judgement and were still disposed to do so, there arose some doubt concerning the wisdom and desirability of this new move. But after an informal meeting of the younger members of the family, in which they discussed freely this new move that the father proposed to make, it was found that the feeling of doubt was shared by every prospective stepchild present.

After due consideration, however, it was unanimously decided that each one should keep silent, conceal all of their feelings, and hope for the best. They found this very easy to do, as none of them were pressed for an expression of opin-

ONE OF FOUR

ion concerning the contemplated move, and they were not perfectly satisfied concerning the propriety of offering it unsolicited. So notwithstanding all of the opinions and doubts entertained by the four, none of whom were yet in their teens, the day arrived and the event transpired. As for any account of the wedding, in minute detail, I am sure that none of the four could now give it;

But a day to be long remembered was that on which the father and his second wife who was now the stepmother arrived.

We can easily imagine how much the most timid of the little ones dreaded to appear and be introduced, petted and kissed, as they knew would now be the order. At this age James (we will now call him "James", for he is now old enough to enjoy larger mention, and will naturally fill more space,) entertained a great aversion to being kissed in the mouth, unless he could select the one who would be willing to perform the unpleasant task.

RUMORS OF WEDDINGS

But as, in this instance, he had no choice, he resigned himself to his fate and, relying on his father's judgement, took the consequences.

Had there been any just and reasonable grounds for his suffering such consequences as followed, this part of the record would be missing; But, as there were no such grounds and the consequences were only the results of a foolish imagination, we will complete the record.

In the excitement that accompanied the various introductions the father failed to notice all that transpired. And when the company got settled down to comparative quiet again, he turned to James and said "Son, did you kiss your new mother?" "Yes", replied James (with an air of satisfaction in an opportunity to deliver himself), "I did, but it made me sick".

A roar of laughter was all that James remembered of what followed. If any more questions were put to him that day by his father they are not available for record.

ONE OF FOUR

During the weeks and months that followed the children were more and more impressed with the good judgement of the father as exhibited in the selection of a stepmother for his children.

Though she brought with her two children of her own by a former marriage and all were domiciled in the same home and under the same management, no difference that would indicate that they were not all children of the same parentage was ever noticed by any one.

Never did any mother exercise more tender care or show more consideration for her own children than did this good stepmother for each of these.

CHAPTER V.

THE OLD MILL

As there were now two farms to be managed and these four miles apart, and connected with one of them a large water mill and lumber works, it was decided that it would be wise and economy to move to the farm that had connected with it these other enterprises that required constant and close attention. Accordingly this was done.

This farm was located on old Cedar Creek, which marks the division line between Boone and Calloway counties, and was largely within the compass of what was known as horse-shoe Bend. It was where the creek made a curve around about eighty acres of land, including the house and improvements, also the mill and its works. This creek formed a curve around this portion of the estate and, almost completing the circle, came back

ONE OF FOUR

within about one hundred yards of the beginning of the curve, then running along parallel with the line of its self above the curve for several hundred feet before it turned again and found its general course toward the Missouri river.

Between these two parallel lines of the creek there was a tall steep bluff slanting up from the waters of the creek, on each side, to a narrow ridge that stood above the level of the water about two hundred feet, and formed what was called "The Back Bone". This Back Bone was about three hundred yards long and reached from the highest point above the water down to the level of the mill.

It had been worked over and leveled down some so that there was room for a two-horse wagon to come down from the highest point to the mill, but not room enough for one wagon to pass another on the way.

This was a dangerous and much dreaded descent, And it has since been worked

THE OLD MILL

down more and the roadway enclosed with rock walls on each side at the most dangerous points. For many years the farmers from the north came down this "Back Bone" with wagon loads of grain, with much dread, and with very little assurance of a safe landing.

The old mill stood near the foot of the Back Bone, between the two lines of the creek and at the point where the lower end of the curve made the nearest approach to the upper, was of the old type and run by water-power.

The water came through from the creek on the upper side of the bend and passed over a large pocket-filled wheel to the creek again at the lower side of the bend.

This water, the flow and weight of which turned the large wheel that was connected with and put in motion all of the machinery of the mill, was turned through a small tunnel under the bluff into what was called the "mill race" by lifting a head gate, which was lowered

ONE OF FOUR

to close the entrance to the tunnel when the flow of water was not needed.

This water, as it passed through, was directed to strike the large wheel on one side only, filling the large pockets with the water, thus increasing the weight of the wheel on one side only, causing it to revolve and throw in motion the machinery of the mill. As the pockets around the wheel were all set with the same slant, the revolving of the wheel, when once thrown in motion, would cause all of the pockets on the assending side to empty as those on the descending side were filled by the flow of water and went down with their weight, keeping the wheel in motion. In order to stop the machinery the supply of water was shut off, The filledpockets on the wheel would go down and empty, And with no more filled to pull the wheel it would come to a balance and stop, the water passing on to the creek on the lower side of the bluff.

THE OLD MILL

At the foot of this Back Bone, or where it came to the lowest point, and where the tunnel was cut through to the mill, it suddenly formed another curve upward, like it might be afflicted with some serious deformity of the spine, or was now where the extension was not to be regarded as part of the Back Bone, but only a representation of that appendage terminating the body of a whipped cur, with a curve upward near the front of it coming down to the level of the land and dragging away as though all courage and power to lift it again were lost.

It was on this curve upward the dwelling house stood, something near three hundred yards from the mill, and was reached by a roadway curving around the edge of the bluff with a long and gradual ascent.

But before we look in on the home life here, we pause to look to the hills and valleys surrounding these home scenes, that we may gather from them some

ONE OF FOUR

idea of the picturesque beauty of the surroundings and of the part that nature played in the joys of this home life.

Beneath the hill on which this dwelling house stood ran the waters of Cedar Creek, which, at times, were quiet and not being pushed on by the coming down, in large volume, of waters from above, would settle into deep pools at the low points in the bed of the creek. At these times, when the water was low, these deep pools were connected only by a shallow stream of water that furnished much of the stirring life and music of nature as it rippled over the rocks to the next rest, where it would sink into silence and quietness, for a while, and await its time to join again in the music of the waters as it comes to the surface and is again crowded over to find rest again in another pool nearer the great waters of the deep, to which it must finally go.

The moving of this body of water,

THE OLD MILL

a portion of which never ceased rushing on with its millions of forms of moving life, furnished not only its millions of sparkling suns and music for the lover of nature in the day time, but, for those who would slumber on the brow of the hill, it sent up also many "songs in the night".

After the passing of a cloud to the north, this stream often spread before one, looking from the hill-top, a very awe-inspiring scene, when the deep and dark waters, swelling with power, came rolling down, bearing on its bosom sticks, rails and planks, and even great logs and trees, as though it were moving in conquest of all the low lands near the deep, and going prepared to plant, at once, all that the ravished lands could furnish to line and adorn its own sea of rest.

A few hours after the storm is over, and the wrath of the deep is past, looking to the east, one may see a steep descent to the bed of the creek and get a

ONE OF FOUR

splendid view of the ford, where all farmers from the east must cross to reach the mill with their grain.

During the busy season it was interesting to see, in the procession that came that way, the many and various conveyances in and on which their loads and burdens were transported. As we look, there comes a two-horse wagon drawn by a team of mules that have proved themselves able to draw as much as fifteen or twenty sacks of grain from a distance of four or five miles. Next comes the four-horse team drawing a well-loaded wagon, that was knocking lazily and heavily, and one could easily see that it had come many miles out of the darkness of the previous night and through many long and muddy lanes. Next comes one on horse-back with a full sack of grain that had to be rolled forward more than once as the rider ascended the hill and found that his sack of grain could not keep up speed with the horse as he

pulled for the brow of the hill.

This rolling of the sack forward was easy enough for a full-grown man, but for a boy it was a very difficult task.

many times, when the sack would fail to keep up, we have seen a little fellow exercise judgement enough to turn the horse around, with its head down hill, in order that the law of gravitation might be brought into effect to aid in solving the problem of readjustment.

As it is now growing late, the mill going has ceased and the men and boys, having arrived at the mill, are preparing their beds of sacks and pillows of sacked grain with a view to rest and sleep while they await the movement of the machinery of the mill for their turn the next day, we turn to follow the scene toward the dropping sun.

Looking to the west, down an incline, through corn fields and meadows, we can see the returning stream of the waters of the creek as it found its course

ONE OF FOUR

northward to the west side of the mill , at the foot of the Back bone , which prevented it from making the circle complete . Across this stream to the west was a range of bluffs that caught the first beams of the rising sun to reflect the beauty of the morning light , And then in the evening sent out the shadows over the home , giving the effect of an early sunset and a prolonged twilight , in which , as the shadows deepened , the child mind could picture , in the forms of trees and crags on the hill-tops , many large and hideous looking monsters that seemed to be giving a solemn warning to all the young and helpless not to remain out side in the shadows until those figures that are throwing them over might come down with them in the darkness , bringing on the belated child all the terrors that they portend .

These pictures , formed by the child mind , would not have been very conducive to sound slumber had it not been that

THE OLD MILL

the intense interest of the inner home life caused them to fade long before the call for "bed time". And so completely had they faded out by the time the sunlight touched the scene again that the gray rocks, the wavering hills and the blend of colors in the forest beauty all combined to enable even the child to start the new day with full appreciation of surroundings, as he looks again to the beauty of the hills.

These scenes were of great interest to the occasional visitor, also, many of whom would come during the summer months to fish and hunt, carrying away with them fish, game, curious stones, Indian arrows, and beautiful shells many of which could be picked up along the creek and on the hill-tops, and to enjoy an outing amid these scenes of rare beauty that surrounded the old mill.

CHAPTER VI

PLEASURE AND PROFIT

For the lover of sport in the form of fishing, much of the pleasure of this life would fail if he failed to see in it the drawing, from the streams, of fish-nets or hooks with their shining, dripping and curling catch, that puts into the spirit and life of one who enjoys such sport the thrill of worth-while living.

As most people are constituted with some sense of appreciation of this form of diversion, we may be well assured that this form of recreation was not overlooked.

At that time fish and game laws were not so strict in Missouri, And any one or any company, could effect their catch with sein, net, trap, hook, or any device known that would be effective.

The result was every device known to be effective was used in this form of sport.

It was a great time when a few

ONE OF FOUR

families owning a partnership sein would meet at a time and place appointed, the men to manage the sein and catch, which was not without some difficulty when the sein would hang on a large rock or snag, in deep water, and some one would have to dive to the bottom to release it.

Then, as they came around with the end of the sein, the man who held and managed the staff found no small difficulty when he struck water too deep to wade and would have to swim and manage the staff, keeping one end of it close to the ground that the fish may not escape under the sein. Then when the landing was effected, if the catch was not sufficient another "haul" was made, and then another, if necessary. And this was continued until the catch was all that was desired. Then, with all hands busy, they would soon be cleaned and prepared for the frying pan, which the ladies would have ready. And soon all would be enjoying the feast and fellowship that

ONE OF FOUR

would characterize one of the great days of the season.

For home use, the family at the mill-home could be supplied with choice fish every day. The arrangement of the head and check gates in the mill race, became a great convenience for gathering choice fish in great numbers. It was so easy to lift the head-gate and, at the same time, have a trap-gate at the other end of the race, and when as many fishes as was desired had passed through to the trap-gate, lower the head-gate, thus closing off the flow of water and letting it pass on to the creek below leaving the fishes behind the trap-gate.

In this way fishing was done with certainty. And only the choice ones were taken as all small ones passed, with the water, through the gate.

It was a great sight to look on the flouncing, bouncing fishes, manifesting their uneasiness after the water had passed through the gate and gone. But to a

PLEASURE AND PROFIT

bare-foot boy, it was not a great temptation to jump in among the fishes and fins and take his choice.

But there were other means for the enjoyment of sports and pleasures that were just as alluring and held equally as much charm for the boy. These were enjoyed by more than the human. For there was another being that had some part in most all of the sports in which the two boys of this home indulged. It was "Coley", the little black dog that was always present and ready to enter into any pleasure that could charm a boy.

And any account of these sports that would ignore this ever-present figure would not be complete. Nor would any mention that one might make of a boy and his sports, calling it inclusive and ignoring the presence and the part played by his dog, be of any interest to that boy, more than to find in it an opportunity for him to show his resentment and declare it an insult to his nature.

ONE OF FOUR

That Coley took a deep interest in the boys, in every thing they undertook to do and in every journey they made, goes without question. But, because of some physical ailment, he could not always keep in the shadow of the boys, which seemed to be his fixed purpose in life.

When the weather was warm and he found it necessary to go through any violent exercise to keep up, he would often suffer an attack of dizziness that would cause him to stagger from the path, and even describe a circle and fall. When it came to this he was promptly picked up and carried, the boys taking "turn about", to the end of the journey. For to leave Coley in a plight like that would spoil all fun for the boys, break the spirit of his dogship, and possibly result in an irreparable loss and death. So Coley either followed or was carried to many places where his presence was not a necessity at all.

There were numerous water-holes in

PLEASURE AND PROFIT

63

the creek where, in warm and dry seasons, the water stood almost still long enough to warm up and become inviting, and a great temptation to break over a commandment and exercise themselves as would-be swimmers would be held out to two little boys; And James and J. W., with all their virtues, would sometimes be completely overcome and fall, not only into temptation, but also into the water.

Many times during the summer they found their great pleasure splashing in the water and playing in the warm sun and sand until long past the time they were expected at the house.

One evening, at bed-time, it became evident to a good stepmother that a positive commandment had been broken when she was called to come and see if she could discover what was causing the burning and stinging sensation on the backs of the boys. One look was enough and the case was well in hand.

She at once decided that the patients

ONE OF FOUR

should not be disturbed any more than was necessary, and, as the disturbance each was making seemed to be all that was necessary for the other, saying very little, either of condemnation or comfort, she decided to go at once for the cream pitcher and try to give some relief to two little sun-burnt backs from which most of the skin was either gone or preparing to go. Thinking the sad plight sufficient punishment, she began at once to apply the cream and give directions for the night, consoling the boys with the premise that they would be allowed to sleep on their sides and faces until well again.

Not far from the mill stood another institution that is worthy of mention, as it was the seat of much of the interest and activity of the younger members of the family and also of some other youths of the neighborhood. It was an old tenant house that was no longer used as such, and was now converted into a school-house for the use of the family

PLEASURE AND PROFIT

at the mill-house and two or three other families who lived so far from the district school that it was not convenient for them to attend it.

This plan had obtained before the present tenant-school-house was opened;

A number of terms had been taught by various teachers in a room of the dwelling house on the hill, the teachers boarding with the family. But now as the tenant house was vacant and the mother was desirous of having the school at a greater distance from her, that she may not be disturbed, in the performance of her household duties, by the noise of the school, the tenant house was put in order for school work and a lady teacher was employed to do the best she could with the raw material that she was now to have in hand and, as she supposed, at her command. In holding this position I am sure she was not envied by any one else who was at all competent to teach.

ONE OF FOUR

The teacher, very wisely, made it a point to try to teach the pupils to sing and be joyous and happy, which state is not conditioned on intelligence, Therefore she could entertain some hope that her work for the school may not be entirely lost. That she did accomplish something along this line we are sure; For some of those songs have never been forgotten; but have been sung and passed down to another generation.

As you think of the wise plans and faithful endeavors of this teacher, and form your ideas of her part in the activities of that institution as she filled the days with honest endeavors, do not think that her days there were all filled with pleasures. As is common in the life of the school teacher, many things came up to mar her pleasure. Even the most considerate and obedient one in the school could scarcely be considered entirely innocent of all contributions to that end.

PLEASURE AND PROFIT

Some of the boys and girls who attended this little accommodation school were kept in mind and their careers watched with great interest by the members of this family as long as it was possible to keep track of them.

To give their full names would not be at all difficult; But, as we have not their consent to do this, we will not give their names in full.

We remember, well, another family of four, two boys and two girls, who were near neighbors and attended this little home school. They were Lula, Callie, Sam and Jim. Lula, the oldest, was one of those strong, independent, self-reliant characters who, in a large measure, took charge of the other three and led the way along the winding and narrow path, down the creek, to school and back home in the evening, calling back, to the narrow path, the smaller ones who would sometimes linger at the edge of the water and paddle in it with their

ONE OF FOUR

bare feet, or scamper up the side of the bluff, to scare or catch a squirrel that would bound up ahead of them, or to examine one of the numerous caverns and holes, under the ledges of rocks, where they kept their traps set for various kinds of fur animals, and would look for the game as they went to and from school.

As they would turn aside to these various places of interest, Lula, being the oldest, was the one who had to keep in mind the time of day, the length of time that they could, and could not, afford to waste. This was no small task either, as we all know that time has a way of flying; And it flies very fast as we look, with interest, on the work or pleasure of those of our companions who seem to be entirely unaware of its passing.

Callie was the youngest of the four. She was not in the home school long, as she fell from a horse, when quite young, and sustained such injuries that she never recovered.

PLEASURE AND PROFIT

For many weeks she was unable to attend school, to the sorrow of all; For she was a lovely child and loved by all.

She lived and suffered for a few months and passed away.

Sam was a boy who might have had much more self-assertion and been much more self-reliant than he was.

He was well built, strong and in good proportion, impressing one as a boy with strength enough to defend himself against the imposition of others, and to contend for and secure his natural rights, regardless of the designings of other boys of his age. But, if he possessed any such powers, they were allowed to lie dormant, while poor, timid Sam suffered many indignities from other boys who were disposed to enjoy at his very great expense.

Upon one occasion Sam was ordered, by J. W. and another boy of the school, to prepare himself to die. The chief item of preparation, which they insisted upon, was that Sam should get the spade

ONE OF FOUR

and dig a grave for the interment of his body. Of course Sam was very reluctant to do this and begged to be excused. But J. W., the prosecutor, and the judge, were relentless, and no reprieve would be considered.

James, of this story, seeing Sam's awful plight, and, in his imagination, the sad end to which he was surely coming, unless something could be done very quickly, undertook to defend him.

With tears in his eyes and falling down his cheeks, James pleaded, with all the earnestness of his soul, for Sam's release. But the judge who sat on the case and waited in readiness to recapture and sit on the condemned boy if he dared to relinquish his task and attempt to escape, informed him that no pleading that any attorney could do would have any weight whatever. That the sentence was passed, and Sam must die just as soon as the grave could be prepared.

Which preparation Sam was, by his

PLEASURE AND PROFIT

slow movement, delaying as long as he could. In the last throes of despair, Sam was shaping out the grave when the school bell rang, the execution was staid, and Sam escaped with his life.

Jim was the younger of the two boys, not very strong, of a quiet disposition, and one who could easily adjust his tempers and conduct to get along agreeably with all tempers and dispositions in the school.

There was another boy who came to this school, from a near-by tenant house, and who was known as "Will".

This boy, being the only child in his home, was petted and spoiled, and taught and trained to "let every day provide for its self" and "be careful for nothing" save to reach home before the fading of twilight, and thus save the mother from a season of worry that would render her almost frantic.

To reach the school Will had to cross the creek, which required the

ONE OF FOUR

horse and a helper when the water was up, and to reach home again he had to recross and wend his way around the bend and over a very tall, steep hill.

This circumstance gave to him also the distinguishing title "Hill Billie".

He was true to his training in all of his school work, leaving all care for it, and worry over it, for any one else who might choose to take it. But as the other disciples seemed to have all of that kind of joy that they cared for, Billie's load of care was left and not lifted.

Then when he was called up and required to "stay in" with his load of care, instead of feeling any weight of responsibility for it, about all that he could feel was the depression of spirit that came with the shadows, as they began to lengthen and reach out toward the little school house, like some great, dark monster that threatened to swallow pupil, teacher, house and all.

As these shadows came near, the

PLEASURE AND PROFIT

only thing that could interest Billie was the face of the sun, that was just about to leave him for the night.

He was now seized with a deep longing to be free to mount to the hill-top and see its face once more, before it should die in the west and leave in its wake a frantic mother, out in the darkness, searching, in vain, for the remains of her boy, which remains would then be gone to the caverns of the hills with the wild beasts of the forest.

With this picture in Billie's mind, occupying all of his thought and showing so plainly in his face, the teacher, seeing how hopeless the case had become, accepted a promise for tomorrow, forgetting, for the time, that tomorrow never comes, and let him go home. But not until the time of waiting had brought out the awful picture that Billie had in mind and painted it so it could be plainly seen, not only on his face, but, just as well, on the flying heels of his

ONE OF FOUR

shoes, and the floating tail of his coat, as it reached the summit of the hill just in time to catch the last rays of the falling sun, and, from the hill-top, waved a glad good-night to all in the deepening shadows of the vale.

As it is so much easier to see the faults of others than it is to see our own, we look for them now in the school life of J. W. At heart he was not a mean boy, but, like some others, he very much desired to have his way. The teacher found it quite a difficult task to bring him to realize that, at school, during "books" was not the place nor time for any boy to have his own way. And hence his conception of the situation led to many altercations between the teacher and himself. Upon such occasions, the teacher, having a grasp of so many subjects, one in particular, was able to bring forth some strong points, and J. W. was often humiliated by his loosing out in the arguement.

PLEASURE AND PROFIT

As he advanced in his way and power of thinking he, of course, stood a better show to win out. It occurred to him, during one of these altercations, that he would stand a much better chance to win out if the contest could be waged at longer range. So, as the controversy became more heated, he decided to give himself more room and move about just a little more rapidly than the teacher was able to do, with dignity. But as she lost her sense of dignity, or, for convenience, laid it aside for a time, and came closer, J. W. leaped over the back of a bench that contained the rest of the school and, in doing so, turned it over. As the teacher did not care to walk over the whole school to reach him, and could not do so with any degree of dignity, she paused a moment, thus giving J. W. a chance to make his exit clear and put the entire building between the teacher and himself.

ONE OF OUR

The case was now hopeless and remained so until the father was called to come from the mill, supplement the argument of the teacher and restore order.

Many things transpired in the history of this institution, bringing to those who attended it, not only duties and difficulties, but also much pleasure and profit: which, if we should make a record of all here, it would make of this volume a book much larger than intended and delay this narrative. So we pass on to another scene.

CHAPTER VII.

MODES OF TRAVEL

In looking back on the life we have lived it is interesting to note the many changes that many of our methods have undergone, even in one quarter of a century. One that has undergone many interesting changes is our method of traveling.

As this narrative is dealing with real life in central Missouri, and the writer has not traveled extensively beyond the bounds of a few central states, whose life is very well represented in the life of the section with which this narrative deals, we will notice only the changes in the customs of this one family, and in doing so we will get a fair representation of the changes in the customs of many families in many states.

As it is the custom, and has been since we could remember, for the people in attending the services of the church

ONE OF FOUR

on Sundays, if in the country, to go in their best and most up-to-date conveyance, we will get a better idea of the progress and changes in this line if we will go, in our thoughts, through the past years, over the roads again to church.

In recalling these journeys to church and how they were made, what we record here will seem almost incredible, since, to begin with, we turned the light on this scene during the latter half of the nineteenth century and declared it was all enacted in central Missouri. And yet it is true that, upon one occasion, this family made the journey to church, on a Sunday morning, in a lumber wagon that was drawn by two big stout oxen.

This church was in the neighborhood to the north, and the only road out that way was over the "Back Bone".

It was during a rainy season, large volumes of water had come down and softened the ground at the foot of the great hill, which circumstance placed a bar

MODES OF TRAVEL

before the team of mules that was first enlisted to make the journey, and when their inability to draw the wagon over this difficult place was proven, old Ben and Dick, two of the great heavy oxen that were kept on the farm for heavy logging, were yoked to the tongue of the wagon to draw it on to church, while the pious mules, with their good intentions, were marked "present" and tied to a tree by the roadside to await our return. Of course the arrival of this outfit at the church had no such serious effect as such scene would create now. The services were not broken up, but continued as usual, all due allowance being made for "the ox" having been "in the mire".

This mode of travel was soon discontinued, and this happy family found themselves at last in a new spring wagon bound for the same place of worship.

This was a real innovation, as none but rich people were supposed to ride

ONE OF FOUR

in such conveyances, and it was generally understood that there were very few rich people within the bounds of the circuit, and also that the miller did not belong to this number.

The appearance of this new outfit occasioned far more straining of necks and curious conjectures than did that of the former. And still the preacher was able, in a measure, to preserve order and continue the service until the time for Aunt Lizzie to shout arrived, when, in a large measure, of course, he lost control of the house.

The time came, however, when the new spring wagon lost its newness and began to look old and worn, and now to see even a new one at church was nothing unusual. as many people, even in moderate circumstances, now owned and used them, and new ones were appearing all the time.

William and James were growing in stature, but not in their regard for new

MODES OF TRAVEL

white dresses and well set hats. hence the girls joined in to help the boys out with their arguement that "it would be just as safe and much more convenient for the boys to ride to church on horse back. Finally the entreaties prevailed and the horse-back ride became mode of travel, number three, for the boys.

This called into service little, old, "honest John" -- a little "toe-headed" mule-- whose strength was amply sufficient to carry the burden and make the journey, but whose size was not great enough to command, at all times, the respect of other animals over which he was supposed to enjoy and exercise his superiority. This was impressed upon John and his owner when, one day, John came in contact with a savage hog that stuck a tooth in his side and left him to carry through life an ugly knot on his side as a badge of his weakness and disgrace.

Notwithstanding John's affliction and

ONE OF FOUR

weakness, he was counted amply able to carry some of lifes responsibilities, was pressed into double duty and required to take J. W. in the saddle and James behind it, any where they desired, and could get permission, to go.

On these journeys John's patience and endurance were sometimes tried to the limit and beyond. He offered no objection to the weight of his load or the length of the journey. But when it came to the weight of two leaning to one side and then dropping to the other, before he could regain his balance, and this ending in a pitch and punch battle on his back, John regarded such conduct as beyond the limit, and would enter his protest by proceeding to unload, with very little regard for the safty of his passengers.

When the unloading was finished, the boys would arise from the dust, each charging the other with being responsible for the calamity. James would usually stand, stunned and waiting, while J. W.

MODES OF TRAVEL

being the older, feeling the responsibility of again assembling the parts, with his hat in his hand, would take the back track, hunting his hat and the mule, as John, vanishing in the dust, waved his farewell and turned on speed for home.

Thus John left the boys to add to their modes of travel - number four.

This account brings us up to date in at least two of the modern modes of travel. As long as the mule holds his place in society, and he bids fair to do so for some time to come, he will not cease to be a familiar figure in the life and activities of rural communities.

Of the responsibilities of the rural community life we can count on the mule to carry his part. But when he is forced to the point of rebellion, and one who knows his nature knows that he can be, there will always be some wise enough to prefer to go home as the boys did, and the custom of walking will doubtless be continued also.

ONE OF FOUR

This brings us to mode of travel-number five, and to the last years of the nineteenth century.

The boys now have buggies in which they take the sisters of other boys, and other boys come and take their sisters who are so insistent on observing the principle that a brother should be left free to make his own dates, and not be hindered by attentions to his own sisters who can be just as well attended by boys from other homes.

And now father and mother are left to pair off just as in days of yore.

The one-horse buggy is all that is needed. In it they drive over the line into a new century filled with sweet content, never dreaming that just ahead is a new era in which all known methods of movement will be put to the rear, and left, for all time, in the dust and dimness of ages past and gone.

CHAPTER VIII

DARK DAYS

For this family it was not all joy and sunshine. This happy life saw its portion of the dark days.

Long ago the cloud of sorrow had passed over both sides of this family life, and the time had now come when the clouds were gathering again.

Little Annie, the younger of the stepsisters, suffered a break of the skin on her foot, which formed into an ugly sore and caused much annoyance and pain, and from which blood poison developed, resulting in her sudden death.

This brought great grief upon the entire household; for she was a dutiful, obedient child, of a sweet disposition, and loved by all.

From this time, for several months, the time seemed to drag heavily, as, for each little one, the sense of loss was made more depressing every time they

ONE OF FOUR

would line up for play. But, happily for the child, time seems to swallow up their grief. It seems that a kind Providence can turn on the life of a child a gleam of light even when, for older ones, the cloud hangs heavily and will not pass.

One day the children were taken down to the mill for a few hours of pleasure. Upon their return to the house in the late after-noon it was announced that the doctor had made a visit to the home, during their absence, and left a little boy, only a few hours old, whose name was Thomas, and who was to make his abode there, be treated as one of the family, and be regarded by each of the children as a half-brother; - owing, they thought, to his miniature make up.

As the older ones watched the growth and development of the little half-brother they fully expected that some day he would be large enough to call a full-brother, and the number would again be six.

DARK DAYS

This happy thought was soon clouded again, and it was evident that this life was to be filled with experiences varying and changing.

The time came when the father's movements indicated failing health, as, more and more, as the days went by, he was disposed to let the responsibility of the work at the mill, on the farm and about the home, rest on the strength of John and David, the two young men who, for many months, had been employed as helpers, but were now taking much of the responsibility of the management of affairs, as well as of the work.

As these days of uncertainty and uneasiness passed, one could notice a gradual turning loose, by the father, of much of the work and much of the responsibility for it.

It was finally announced that he must not go about the place or be out of his bed until he had, in a measure, fixed by the family physician, regained his health.

ONE OF FOUR

This time was looked forward to with earnest expectation and great anxiety, and the efforts that were put forth to bring this happy result were all that could be suggested, with any promise.

The good and faithful physician, never wavering in his earnest attention, nor failing to respond to every call with all of his talents and powers, did all that he could to restore the failing health.

And when it became evident to him that, if he stood alone in his efforts, the case would be lost, a specialist was called into consultation, and what the attending physician had suspected was confirmed. The conclusion was that the disease, being an internal cancer, was, even from the first, beyond the power of all medical skill.

With this announcement, to all who understood how serious it was, all hope of the fathers recovery was lost.

It was now evident that to minister to the comfort of the sufferer and, as far

DARK DAYS

as possible, relieve the anxiety of mind and inevitable pain was all that could be done. It was evident also that only in a small measure could this be done.

That anxiety of mind, in the father's solicitude for his children, their future conduct and welfare, was so great that these interests became the subject of much of his thought and conversation.

So much did he desire the best for them, and so often and earnestly did he plead with them to strive to become true men and women, that, had they been old enough to appreciate the great love that prompted him and the pathos of his pleading, their hearts would have been broken many times, as his own true heart must have been when they failed to respond with that positive assurance that he so earnestly desired and so richly deserved.

It was now evident that after all was done that could be done to relieve the sufferer, the efforts were, in a large

ONE FO FOUR

measure futile, for at that time, even the physician was, in the battle with pain, almost helpless. How much more so were those who could only stand by and weep, giving as aid nothing but the consolation of a promise that all will be well only when disease has done its full work, and death, the conqueror of all earthly pain, brings it to an end.

These were the experiences through which this family passed for more than two years, as, from day to day, all hope of the father's recovery faded and was finally lost in a cloud of sorrow that fell deep and dark, and with all the sadness of death, over the home life, when, for him who had been so much to all, the suffering was ended.

That the relations and affairs of this home-life could not continue as they had been was now obvious. There was an estate to close, in which various interests were involved, and all must be adjusted according to the law.

DARK DAYS

The children must be provided for, and, as the continued care of four children of another parentage would now tax, too heavily, the powers of a good and willing stepmother, the four children—May, Ellen, William and James, for whom a guardian had been appointed, must now be separated and sent to the homes of relatives who are able and willing to care for them. One uncle was to take the older sister, May, another uncle was to take the older brother, William, and another was to take the two younger children, Ellen and James, thus giving the two younger children the advantage of being in the same home.

Just what this separation meant to these children we will have to leave to the vague imagination of those who never knew anything less than to enjoy the association of an unbroken circle in the home life, and to the sad memories of those who have seen the disintegration of their own home and its life, and felt the pangs of separation

ONE OF FOUR

from those most dear. No other account can be given.

Words fail us when we attempt to use them to express these emotions.

They are too sacred to disturb. So we leave the description in its vagueness or sadness, just as it comes to the mind of each, and follow the record of those of this broken home-life who were now destined to go in their several ways.

The elder stepsister, Effie, and the little half-brother, Thomas, were to remain with their mother on the farm; and of their movements and experiences, from this time, the four knew very little.

One day the four received the sad news that the good step-mother had taken sick suddenly and died. The four step-children were permitted to return to the old mill-home, mingle their tears with those of their half-brother and little loved companion of other days, attend the funeral, and separate, to never meet, all together again.

RAPID CHANGES

CHAPTER IX

In the course of life we find that there are times when circumstances will not admit slow movement. However much we may desire to choose our gait and go at our leisure, there are times when we are compelled to mend our gait, step more lively and even put our powers of momentum to flight if we are to entertain any hope of reaching a desired goal.

These times came to some of the subjects of mention in this chapter, as is well attested by both methods and results,

Effie and little Thomas were subjects of the guardianship of one of Effie's own kindred, with whom they were to live, and who lived some distance from the county line; and as the members of the family of four were all placed some distance from the county line, in the opposite direction in Boone county, the distance apart was considerable. Hence the two families of children were effectually and permanently

ONE OF FOUR

separated, and very seldom saw each other. As the children of the step-mother were left with means sufficient to educate them, Effie's guardian suggested that she attend college and complete her education.

To this plan she readily agreed and went to college, while little Thomas grew into strong and robust boyhood, remaining with his uncle George until Effie finished her education and married, when she took him to live with her until he grew to manhood. He had not much more than attained unto his majority when the good sister came to the end of her earthly journey.

She lived, however, long enough to see him married and settled in his own home in Mexico, Missouri, where he now resides.

The little May, of years ago, is now a girl so large for her age—which we will not tell here, as an important event that is subject to an age limit followed so closely—that she might easily be taken for a young lady old enough to make her choice of a

RAPID CHANGES

companion for life. But as her age was so well known to her guardian it became necessary for her to make a study of his manner and movements and consider what attitude he might assume toward any plan that she might form concerning David, for it was now becoming a matter of conjecture, not enveloped in the mystery that May and David supposed it was, as to what meaning those shy glances might have; why he always chose to remain at home on Sundays and be on hands to help with the feeding and milking when it was not required of him; what might be the subject of those whispered conversations that were carried on at no great distance from eager, curious listening ears; and what could be the cause of the strange coincidences in which these two were always the ones, and only ones, to drop behind the crowd, or lead the procession, or form a wing either to the right or to the left, being almost invariably the ones, and only ones to give to the appearance of the crowd these forms and points.

ONE OF FOUR

This young couple supposed, as many others have, that, to the eyes of all the world, these maneuvers were lost; that the innocent, inexperienced, and, consequently, unsuspecting public had never even noticed those silent, easy, and seemingly natural and unintentional driftings; and even if they should, the meaning of it all would still be enveloped in a great mystery that they would not be able to solve. But alas! Others have thought, as they thought, "It is all our own secret and no one else can know it. It is past finding out, if we only keep it."

But keep it if you can. It has never yet been done, and never can be.

Love shines out, whether we will it so or not, just as evident and just as clear as the sunlight.

And long before May and David realized it, the mystery was solved.

Others were casting shy glances too.

Others had remained to attend to business more than was required too.

RAPID CHANGES

Others, too, were passing the same way and bound for the same port.

Hence they were not surprised at all, but would have been disappointed had it not all terminated just as it did.

Others, too, have drifted. The rolling tide is on, and has been for ages.

In all the ages of the world it has never ceased to roll.

Many ships of life have been wrecked by the same breakers.

Many hearts have been bruised and broken as they have been carried by the same tide and dashed against the same rocks that have been, for others, a safe refuge, and that mark the land of love and dreams.

It was not in May's power to change her age or cause any one who knew it to forget it. Hence she felt that she dare not dismiss from her mind all thought of her uncle, and what his thoughts and movements might be. So David was informed that a trip on horse-back, to parts

unknown to those not with the company, and to a parson unknown in these parts, would be an absolute necessity if he was to be accepted, at once, and the guardian uncle evaded.

To all of this David readily agreed and the trip was promptly planned and the journey rapidly and safely made.

As a marriage license was not required in Missouri at that time, very few questions were asked and they soon returned "man and wife."

After some years of moving and shifting about in the neighborhood, they bought a farm-home, not far from the old mill, where they have been contented to live to this day.

Many of the common experiences of life have come to them, bringing their joys and sorrows, as they have lived, loved and cared for a family of interesting children.

CHAPTER X

CONFLICTING PLANS

“Cedar Lawn”, as the farm-home of the uncle - with whom J. W. was to live - was called , was near the sight of another “old mill” of long ago .

The history of this old mill and its usefulness closed so far back in the annals of life that the writer can recall nothing but an old pond , on the bank of which lay an old wheel , about six feet in diameter , of ponderous weight , with all the marks of age and discarded energy . This appearance was due to the fact that its connection with other parts of the mill had been severed , either by over-time working of its usefulness , or by the consumption of a fire that long ago committed its destruction and died . At any rate the wheel remained to confirm the statement that , at one time a mill stood by the pond and did its duty in its day of usefulness .

This old mill and the Cedar Lawn home

formerly belonged to J. W.'s grandfather, and had been handed down as an inheritance to the youngest son.

The grandfather had passed away some years before, and the old home was now in the charge of the good uncle with whom J. W. was to make his home.

These plans were all formed and agreed to by the two uncles, one of whom was guardian for the four children.

This guardian uncle was planning for J. W. without his full knowledge and consent, and with no suspicion that his plans and those of J. W. might conflict.

J. W. seeing that his guardian seemed to entertain no fear of serious consequences should his plans not meet with those of the young lad in perfect accord, concluded that it might be wise and well for him to say little and try to adjust himself to them. In preparation for this, he would often repair to the bank of the old pond and gaze into the water, that he might get a view of all the world up-side

CONFLICTING PLANS

-down, and thus, for a time, rest his mind and spirit in the thought that his upset plans are now in perfect harmony with the world beneath the water.

When this means of adjustment was employed, and his mind and spirit rested, he would come back to the life above the surface better prepared to appreciate the higher and better things in real life.

Realizing the benefits to be derived from this diversion, he often resorted to this old pond bank for meditation.

Then when ready for real active life again, that he might come back to it with a full sense of appreciation, he would drop a pebble or clod into the water and throw this subterranean world into a great cloudy commotion, that he may find more charms in the world to which he is now turning.

The charms of active life that are to be found in doing chores could not hold him long, and we soon find him at his favorite resort again.

On the bank of this old pond he often sat, lazily, during the summer days, watching the ducks as they paddled in the edge of the water on the opposite side of the pond and sometimes ventured so far out that, to reach the bottom and pull a worm out of the mud, it was necessary for them to put their feet straight up in the air and paddle with them, gently, that they might not topple over and embark on the surface up-side-down.

This feat, performed by the ducks with such ease and grace, and repeated just as often as he would express his appreciation in laughter, and just as long as he would show his interest by staying and watching, left with him the impression that it was all done for his entertainment, or just for the ducks to "show off", as he had so often done by holding to the grass and standing on his head with his feet in the air as long as the feat proved to be of any interest to those for whose benefit he was performing.

CONFLICTING PLANS

This performance of the ducks would sometimes prove to be so interesting that he would almost forget to watch the cork and line, with which he had hoped to discover the presence and land the person of a big mud cat. So much of interest did he find in the depths and on the surface of the water that he had very little time to think, with regret, of the time when the mill that stood here, so much like the old mill at home, served its last day and went down.

It was not his nature to stay with one scene very long or to loose too much time with thought of a past that is beyond recovery, or of a future with which he could not deal, immediately.

It was not that he had no appreciation of the past nor that he had no interest in the future. But the present seemed, to him, more real, and the immediate future more nearly present than it does to the average boy.

Hence we do not have to follow him long or wait many days until we find him

ONE OF FOUR

interested elsewhere.

He is now in the milk lot with the two negro boys, with whom he was now well acquainted and on terms of companionship in many pranks that did not get sanction at headquarters.

A passing calf, whose back looked so clean and soft, and so much like a padded saddle, brought back to him fond memories of little old "Honest John", and suggested to him that mode of travel number three might still be indulged in with pleasure.

And without taking time to weigh the consequences, count the difference and note the contrast between a ride on the saddled back of little old "Honest John" and one on the bare back of an unbroken and unbridled calf, he accepted the invitation of the passing calf and landed himself for a ride.

He had no more than gained his position when it began to dawn on him that to hold it was now his serious problem.

Down the hill hoof and honker went

bounding and resounding until the two negro boys, thinking some modern machine had been turned into the milk lot with no one to steer it, leaped from their milk stools and, looking in the direction from whence the startling sound came, saw what, from a distance, looked very much like J. W. "showing off".

He was again on his head, standing with his feet in the air, with perfect poise, and with nothing to hold to now but the dust; which feat seemed to have made even "the little dog laugh" and the calf jump over the moon.

In addition to these feats and pleasures J. W. was notified that it was his duty to help carry the wood in, prove himself a worthy example for his two small cousins, and attend the near-by school.

These duties were taken up in order, and, doubtless, in some measure, performed. They were made lighter, however, by the features of play and pleasure that he was allowed to add and enjoy in

ONE OF FOUR

connection with his serious and faithful performance of duty.

School work and submission to the authority of, what he considered, a hard school-master was not enjoyed with any special relish.

For him, the days at school would have been dull, indeed, had it not been for the presence of Eddie and Nellie—two pretty girl cousins—, the icy surface of the old pond near by, and the occasional snow bank, from which he found it convenient to make a hard snow ball, while the teacher was snow-balling with the big girls, and could not afford to stop to ask who it was that had hit him or take offense at any one for doing so, and land it on the top of the School-master's head with the satisfying thought of "getting even".

All of these pleasures, the last not the least, stood out as making the school life, after all, worth while.

But to have to bear the responsibility of being a good and worthy example for the

two small cousins would add so much hard study and disciplining of himself to that of his school duties which were, even now, far too heavy, and on account of which he was fearful of a nervous break-down, that he was not willing, under the circumstances, to assume so much. And here, again, J. W. found it impossible to make his plans conform to those fixed for him by others.

He tried every plan he could think of to find a solution and, after considering it long and well, came to, what seemed to be, the only possible conclusion: to wit-- That to ask any boy of his age and disposition to be a worthy example for two small cousins, pursue his studies and perform all of his other duties, was to ask entirely too much; and that, in this demand, a great injustice to him was about to be done.

So far as he could see, the only way to avoid it was to tie his most valuable possessions in a handkerchief, and go so far that his kind uncle would never hear of him

ONE OF FOUR

again until he could grow to manhood and return of his own accord, So he took his departure and went about four miles to the home of his married sister, May, and announced his purpose to remain as one of the family.

To say that he found a hearty welcome is a very mild statement of the facts.

J. W. began to adjust himself to the new situation as well and as fast as he could and was well pleased with the change.

May and David, being older, knew that it would be much better for him if he would only try to make his plans harmonize with those of his uncle and return to the home that he left, but they hesitated to suggest it, knowing that the guardian uncle would soon be on the scene and make the suggestion himself.

While they were delighted to have him with them, and were doing all they could to make the brief stay pleasant for him, just as they expected, one fine day J. W. was surprised, beyond measure, to see his

CONFLICTING PLANS

III

uncle coming , and to know that his whereabouts was about to be discovered , and that now , like his place on the back of uncle's calf , his place in this new home would be very hard to hold . He knew now that all requests and arguements for an indefinite stay would be useless , so he meekly submitted , and was taken back to his uncle's home for another stay .

But the second placing was no more successful than the first , and he was soon to be hunted and placed again .

His guardian , thinking that a change might quiet his mind , made the third placing with another uncle , by marriage , who agreed to do the best he could for him until he could grow to manhood , if he would only stay . But the change was not a success , and soon J. W. was with May and David again . Here the indulgent guardian gave up the chase and left him to form a partnership with David , with whom he continued for many months .

Later he secured a position in town and

found in the village post-master's daughter one that he believed , at the time , he would be perfectly willing to obey , joined the church of her choice , and was soon appealing to his guardian for help in complying with the laws of the state , as he prepared to form a life-partnership with the girl of his choice . This assistance was readily and freely granted , and he was soon " placed " again , and , of his own free will , settled down , assuming duties that belong to the head of a home .

As he was still two years from his majority , we have in this , proof of his disposition to go , without unnecessary delay , to a desired goal , assume responsibilities that naturally belong to those in advance of his age , and that , to him , the present seemed more real and the immediate future more nearly present than it does to the average boy .

These traits of character all grew into his manhood , and remained prominent in his subsequent life .

CHAPTER XI

OTHER SCENES

It was with many thoughts of home and loved ones and with eyes wide open with curious wonder and dimmed with mist, formed from a sense of necessity and loss, that James and Ellen alighted from the conveyance and walked, hand in hand, on the brick pavement, to the door of their new home.

The door was opened by the smiling aunt, who was waiting to give them a welcome, which they accepted as only children can, and entered to be greeted by their cousin Lizzie — who was almost a young lady, and motherless too, as the kind aunt was only her stepmother, — and by another cousin, Ted, — who was an orphan also, a son of uncle George, and now almost grown.

Ted had been in this home about ten years, or since his father's death.

These three, with uncle Peter, Solon, the hired man, and black John, constituted the family.

ONE OF FOUR

It was without any embarrassment, on the part of any of the family, that James and Ellen were received.

Surprised that their sudden appearance seemed to embarrass no one but themselves and that they seemed to be just taken for granted, the two concluded that it must have been a well formed and well understood plot.

James and Ellen, in separate chairs, swinging their feet, in perfect time with each other and with the pendulum of the old clock that stood on the shelf, looked often at each other nodding recognition and smiling approval of each other and of other things, and had very little to say until the way for them to get to themselves alone was opened by "Aunt Lou" who said "If you children care to do so, you may go out into the yard and play, and I will call you in time for the evening meal." Then, glancing at Aunt Lou, and seeing the set of her chin, James and Ellen concluded, simultaneously, that to try to

conform their movements to her suggestions would be the wise thing to do ,

So , just as their eyes met , four little bare feet dropped to the floor and found their way to the green grass on the lawn .

They were soon discussing the trip , the family , the landscape , the house and every thing they saw in it .

They were wondering how long they would stay here ; if they would stay and grow to manhood and womanhood as Ted and Lizzie had done ; what round of duties they would have to perform , if any , and if they would be able to please Aunt Lou and Uncle Peter and get along agreeably with the other members of the family , which they were very desirous of doing .

They hoped to find in Ted and Lizzie a real big brother and sister , and to be able to add pleasure to the home life as well as to enjoy the same in it .

Uncle Peter being one of the uncles of whom James and Ellen had heard their father ask that he be one to see after and

ONE OF FOUR

care for his children when they should be left fatherless, and hearing his promise that he would do so, James and Ellen drew on this promise for a feeling of rest and security that was greatly needed at this time, and in which they found great comfort.

As they looked about the place and saw the three large barns, at various distances from the house and from each other, they began to wonder why so many and what each was built for, in view of the other two. In trying to solve this problem they noticed a drove of mules in the lot where one barn stood, a bunch of sheep and cows in another, and horses in the other. So they concluded that one of them must be a mule barn, one a cow and sheep barn, and one a horse barn.

This they found to be correct.

As they looked they saw, on the top of the mule barn, a very strange sight.

It was a huge bird that looked to be as large as a goose and had a tail as long as

OTHER SCENES

that of a horse, with all the colors and beauty that they had ever seen, in all birds and fowls, blended in the one fowl and its tail. The tail feathers were three or four feet long, had all the colors of the rainbow, and at the end, a large central spot, in each feather, that looked like a big black eye. And when it alighted on the ground, lifted its tail feathers over its back and spread them out in the shape of a large fan, no beauty that they had ever seen in nature or art could compare with it.

Upon inquiry they were told that it was a peacock, and that this was only one of the many that were on the place.

To the minds and eyes of James and Ellen this peacock was the big wonder of the day.

At length it was noticed that the sun was becoming round and red and dropping into the tops of the apple trees to the west, giving notice of its purpose to send the shadows over, leaving them to deepen slumber after it is gone, paling and smiling

ONE OF FOUR

its sad good night as it drops into the darkness of the deep beyond.

They could now look into the face of the falling and receding sun with eyes wide open as they talked of its rich color and changing lustre, expressed regrets over its departure, speculated as to the possibility of its failing to return, comparing its plight with that of themselves and concluding that possibly the secret of its paling and blushing lay in the fact that it, too, began to realize that it must spend the night in strange parts where, through all the long hours of the night, it would be denied the privilege of looking into the smiling faces of its two very best friends, who are just as reluctant as the sun itself to say the sad good night.

Just as the great red ball was about to tip the ground they were aroused from their reverie by the clear shrill voice of Aunt Lou calling to them to come and prepare for "supper".

Coming to the back porch, they

ascended the tall steps to the kitchen where they were to make preparations and pass into the dining room, with the other members of the family, for the evening meal. James and Ellen were seated on one side of the table, Uncle and Lizzie on the other, Aunt Lou at one end to attend to pouring the water, milk and coffee, and Ted at the other to return thanks, carve the meat, send it around the table and risk his chance. The hour was spent very pleasantly, all becoming acquainted with the new members of the family and their manners, and seeing with what ease, or uneasiness as the case may have been, they tried to adjust themselves to the new conditions.

CHAPTER XII

RELIGION IN THE HOME

It was now understood that the most important feature of the home life was to be maintained ; that the religion of Christ, as is manifested in devotion to the Lord and to the church , was to have , in the every day life of this home , a prominent place , and that the Sundays were to be filled with the spirit of worship .

To James and Ellen this was not a new idea at all . It had been the order in their home life since they could remember .

The father , in his life time , was one who could appreciate fully all that the church stands for , and was free to bear testimony to it in the record of his life .

The children had been taught to revere sacred things and to value divine truth . So it was not a new thing to hear the announcement that the pastor of the circuit , who preached once each month at the chapel , would spend a day or stay all

night in the home.

Casting back now one can recall many of the familiar forms, good, kind spirits and noble characters who made pastoral visits to the homes of these children.

One whose presence in the home was a joy and satisfaction to the older ones, but whose face and form the younger children cannot recall, was Rev. Rich, who was a great-uncle of the Four. He, with his family, often visited in the home near the old mill. And when he and his wife would return to their work some of the children would stay for many days, and even weeks, to enjoy the country life and enter into the many pleasures and pranks of their little "country cousins".

Another whose presence in the home was always attended with a welcome delight was Rev. White, who was instrumental in building the new chapel, and who, for convenience in serving the circuit, made his home, the first year, on the farm that was, at that time, owned by the

ONE OF FOUR

father of the "four". As one of his churches, the "chapel", was in the neighborhood, he often visited the family at the old-mill-home, and there was formed a close friendship with the miller that lasted as long as he lived. Neither was this tie severed when the father passed away; but it was continued with the children of the next generation, through a half century.

Of the pastors who came and went, and left the stamp of their godly lives on the life of this home, we might mention many others, two of whom deserve special mention. They are Rev. Rice, whose telling words will be remembered as long as life lasts; and Rev. Groves, who baptized and received the writer into the church, pointing out to him the way of life, and whose fatherly interest and care did much to plant his feet in a way of life from which he has had no desire to turn back.

As memories of such men and events extended back through the lives of these

RELIGION IN THE HOME

children, as far as memory could reach, it was the most natural thing for James and Ellen to accept the situation and regard the religion of the new home as a necessary part of life. However, it would be exacting too much of them to require of them to know, at this tender age, all purposes that service, praise and prayer may serve, or to have all ideas of these things well arranged in their minds. It was perfectly natural for them, seeing through a small glass very darkly, to wonder at the order in which family devotions were sometimes conducted.

Hence it is not surprising that they failed to see the wisdom of a certain order, and could not understand why it should not even be reversed.

They entertained grave fears that "Auntie" was getting her ideas of practical religion crossed when, after a season of correction in which a little switch played a prominent part, she would call them in, read from the Bible and pray.

To James and Ellen, this was a very

ONE OF FOUR

strange order.

They, like all children, missing so much of the meaning of utterances in prayer, and having their minds on another experience, which they were unable to dismiss from their thoughts just yet, and over which there was no disposition to shout, could not see the need of prayer after the damage was done.

Had the order of service been left to them they would certainly have arranged it to have had the prayer before the operation.

In course of time, when they grew older and could appreciate the meaning and spirit of utterances in prayer, it all came clear, and they could see the wisdom of the order and appreciate the spirit in which the order was arranged.

CHAPTER XIII

BAFFLED

As no mention of domestic economy, table etiquette or diet had been made, James and Ellen had about concluded that those horrible table manners and all of that silly talk about economy and health would not be in vogue here, and that they would now be allowed to eat their meals without being annoyed with these things.

They were not left with this delusive thought very long, for they were soon informed that every finger that presumes to assist in handling a knife, fork or spoon must assume a certain position, with reference to the instrument in use, to each of the other fingers and to the thumb, and that this must become a fixed habit from which a finger must never vary.

Then, while eating, the mouth must be kept closed, so that, from it, no sound could emit, and there could be no

ONE OF FOUR

external evidence of what is going on within, more than one might gather from the lowering and lifting of the chin.

They were to remember, too, that it was against the rules to call for a biscuit until they had eaten a piece of corn bread.

Of course, to try to keep these and so many other rules in mind was a great tax on the mental powers, and also had the effect of extracting much of the joy from the meal.

With this great disappointment following so closely the delightful experience and favorable impressions of the first meal, their thoughts went out in search of another promise, and turned, at once, to the orchard of big red and yellow apples that not only loaded the trees so heavily that some had limbs broken down with their weight, but even covered the ground beneath the trees. Here they hoped to be allowed to eat without any regard for any rules whatever, handle the apples, while eating, just any way they might

BAFFLED

choose to handle them , with no thought of any position of fingers , more than to place them on that portion of the surface where they were not ready to bite , begin without any ceremony whatever and operate without any restraint on the music of mastication , and entirely free from that awful condition that a chunk of corn bread must be operated on first .

With these assurances in mind they frequently visited the orchard and enjoyed the luscious fruit , with no restraint and no embarrassment .

After a short season , they found that this , too , could not continue .

The coming of the fall months , with the cold and slight freezing , soon necessitated the gathering of all fruit that was to be used during the cold months , and placing it in the cellar .

As soon as this was done that free access to the apples was ended .

No one was permitted to go into the cellar and help themselves to apples or

ONE OF FOUR

pears without first securing the consent of "Auntie", who, after giving it, would invariably add her charge "get a rotten one." And then the privileged one would go down into the cellar, and almost down into despair, as that last solemn charge rang in the ears, extracting from the privilege most of the joy it had contained.

The winter months passed with their round of variations, duties and pleasures, such as school, chores, nut-crackings, corn-poppings and, mingled with it all, a deep and constant longing for the return of the blue birds and the summer sun.

At length the time came when the flitting of the butterfly proclaimed the glad news that Summer is here.

This was the time to which this boy and girl had looked forward in anticipation of many bright and happy days together in their play in the summer sunshine.

But now they are reminded that life is not just a round of pleasures, even in the summer time.

BAFFLED

Ellen is informed that, now, as school is out, her duties will be many. She is to help with the dishes, the chickens, the lawn and flowers, and be ready for every good work that her hands may find to do.

James is informed that he is now old enough to handle a team, and that he will be expected to learn to hitch up, handle the harrow and drag, drop corn, thin corn, hoe corn, think corn and think very little else until wheat harvest, and then think only wheat until it is all safe and in the stack.

Only one variation from this course was provided for, and that was, if the ground should become too wet to be worked, he might be allowed to exercise himself cutting sprouts.

This round of duties kept James in the fields and forests, with the men, most of the time.

These activities extended over all of the land-holdings of the uncle, from the

“Curd place”, three miles north, to the “Gooding ranch”, two miles east, and many acres to the west and south.

Hence it is plain enough why there was no time for play. And any plans, formed by any one on this farm, for wasting time, would have conflicted with those of the good uncle and been defeated, as many minor plans, formed for other purposes, had been.

The uncle's plans were made with a view to managing a large farm and caring for a large family, five of whom were orphans and unable to care for themselves.

Hence, for him, with so much to do, the time was going fast enough. And the Summer, too, with its butterfly wings, was soon gone.

CHAPTER XIV

UPS AND DOWNS

The time for gathering fruit came again, and the children were enlisted to help. They were sent to the orchard under instructions to do what they could in gathering the fruit for winter keeping.

Each was given a large tin bucket with instructions to place the picked apples in the tin buckets and not bruise them. And noiseless activity was to be regarded as the test of fidelity to the trust in the performance of duty.

From the general make-up of the large tin buckets and their ready response to every slight touch with forbidden music, James and Ellen soon discovered that their fidelity was being put to a very severe test. Thinking that "Auntie" would make all due allowance for the severity of the test, they became over-confident, dropped a few apples in the

ONE OF FOUR

bucket, gently, and brought down upon their heads condemnation that expressed its self in terms unmistakable, and almost unbearable, as a little keen water sprout began to lap around them and do penal duty for an offended aunt.

Then, in order, came the cider making, in which process the windfalls and inferior apples were utilized for making the cider which was to be made into "pure apple vinegar."

This work was done out in the yard near the smoke house and a large peach kiln. The apples were carried from the orchard to this cider mill, ground and pressed, and the extracted juice was carried to the cellar, in buckets, and put into a barrel to be converted into vinegar. The task of carrying the cider to the cellar was left to those who were not strong enough to handle the sacks of apples or to press the juice out; The heavy work being done by the men.

The transferring of the juice from the

press to the cellar was the task of James, Ellen and Lizzie. When the last three buckets of juice were ready to go, a contest for speed was put on.

By some means, Ellen and Lizzie got a good start, and, instead of carrying their buckets down into the cellar, as James supposed they had done, left them just inside of the outer door, on the top step, and disappeared, going into the kitchen. When James arrived at the outer door, at the head of the steps, supposing the girls were down in the cellar emptying their buckets, in great haste, he opened the door and jumped in, landing in a bucket of juice and thence down the steps, holding his feet in the air as if to let them drip and dry while he made his rapid descent.

When he was picked up and put together, his feet were still wet, his face skinned and his nose bruised and bleeding profusely.

This unhappy closing of the race

ONE OF FOUR

ended the work ,and for a time, all thought of it , as all of the buckets were empty and all hands were busy trying to revive and rebuild a boy .

For several days James succeeded in impressing the family with the thought that he was , in a very large measure , incapacitated , and was allowed a suspension of duties , just in proportion as they were so impressed .

In the mean time Ellen and Lizzie , who had out-stripped James in the race , were required to go ahead with their work , washing and drying dishes , after each meal , and putting them away until needed again . Ellen , in her newly-acquired haste , insisted on carrying to the safe a tall stack of dishes , much too high and heavy for her , that she might thereby expedite the work and save many needless steps . In this , she over-estimated both her strength and power of poise ;

And just as she was about to reach the safe , her powers seemed to fail and she

UPS AND DOWNS

came to the floor with a crash.

She arose with some difficulty and with a feeling of utter loss. She had now lost her strength and poise and also her confidence. The crash brought a loss of all values involved, and she too was at a loss to know what to do, or how to effect the next break and break the news to "Aunt Lou."

The problem of the next break was soon solved, as "Aunt Lou" appeared on the scene, having received her portion of the shock, and seemed to have a perfect grasp of the whole situation, Ellen included.

For a time, she seemed to be at a loss too; and to feel that nothing could be done that would be at all in keeping with the occasion. So she held Ellen firmly, as if to prevent her going to pieces too, until she could think of the best thing to do, and, after a moment, in which Ellen was left to wonder what next, Ellen was surprised and relieved, beyond measure, when "Aunt Lou"

ONE OF FOUR

loosened her grasp and said, in a sweet and quiet tone, "Get your bonnet now and go up to the barn and tell your uncle that I said he must get ready and go to town and get me some dishes, before time for another meal, and when he asks for an explanation, just tell him what has happened."

Ellen lost no time in finding and adjusting her bonnet and making her start for the barn. She was glad enough to go, thanking her stars for the happy termination of such a dreadful affair.

As she came near the barn and saw her uncle in the lot, it began to dawn on her that the incident was not yet closed, and she began to almost wish that "Auntie" had been kind enough to have taken sufficient satisfaction for her faults out of her system. And the questions arose - "How can I approach him? What will he think and what will he say and do? This kind uncle who has never spoken to me an unkind word,

UPS AND DOWNS

How can I afford to break to him such provoking news and then have to state that it was all my own carelessness, for which I now ask him to find something to atone and to pay the price?".

The thought of having to break such news to her uncle was, to Ellen, the most dreadful thing that she could think of. But, coming to the worst, she could see no way out of it, so she did her very best to carry out the instructions of the good aunt, who, as Ellen thought, had let her off so happily.

The uncle was greatly amused.

He seemed more than willing to pay the cost, and to think it well worth the price.

As so much of James time was taken up with larger farm duties, and Ellen was growing larger and stronger, to her round of duties was added that of helping James with his task of milking the cows.

These duties had some accompaniments

ONE OF FOUR

that were neither ornamental nor helpful. One that never failed was the presence of the old white cat called Snow.

Snow was always on duty when the milk stool was set, to keep vigil from the top of the gate post nearest the milk bucket, and as soon as enough was poured into the bucket for her to reach it without having to duck her head too deep and incur too much risk, and the milker was again busy, to stir herself, and come down and test it.

This had been repeated so often and had become so provoking, that James had determined to put a stop to it; and with this in view, he placed a nice little hickory switch where he could easily and quickly get it when it was needed, then proceeded as usual to draw the first quart of milk and pour it into the bucket, keeping one eye on old Snow.

As he took his seat on the stool again and began pulling for another quart, Snow seemed to "smell a mouse" and did

UPS AND DOWNS

not yield to the temptation to come down until the third quart was poured in and the white foam was raised to full view. This was more than Snow could stand ; and disregarding all evidence of coming trouble , as soon as the milker was again busy , she began to stir herself as quietly as she could and , reaching the bucket , put her head over the edge and down far enough to enjoy herself until reminded by some stir in the direction of the milker that to linger longer would not be safe . This stir failed to alarm her ; and , before she knew what was coming , her joy was ended ; for James had her tail in one hand and the switch in the other , and she was suspended right over the milk bucket and her fur was flying in as many directions as the sound of her voice , as she screamed for mercy , of which she entertained very little hope .

However the agony ended sooner and more happily than she had hoped for when James let her slip from his grasp

ONE OF FOUR

and she went down into the milk, getting a good application of the warm, soothing and healing milk to every needy portion of her burning body, and scampered away, not very well satisfied with the result of her venture, but equally as well satisfied with it as James was with the cure.

James now called Ellen into council, and the two began to rack their brains to figure a way out of, what now became, a great difficulty. Here was a bucket of milk utterly ruined for kitchen or table use--so far as any one who knew the circumstances might be concerned--and yet there was no question about the inadvisability of telling these circumstances to "auntie".

They finally decided that as the milk was just as good as any for the use of one who knew nothing of the circumstances, and to tell all of the circumstances would only deprive "Auntie" of milk, that she would enjoy so much, when she could just as well have and enjoy

UPS AND DOWNS

it without a sense of loss ; And in view of these charitable considerations , they concluded that it would be best to just take the milk to the house as usual , say nothing about what had occurred , Ellen agreeing to be the martyr , and , to keep down all suspicion of the unusual , touch the milk very lightly until this particular quantity was all used up .

James proposed to leave off the use of milk entirely , which was not unusual in his case , let the good aunt have her full share and more , and not deprive her of any milk or pleasure , or of any bliss that ignorance of their misfortune could afford .

CHAPTER XV

EVENING SHADES

It was a very warm day in the month of June, the corn fields were showing their green marks, and to keep the green from spreading, with the growth of weeds, and covering the entire surface, too soon, all hands were busy. Ted, Solon and John, each with a team and plow, went to the task of keeping the "middles" dark until the waving corn blades could grow long enough to cover them with the welcome green. To finish the work "Uncle Peter" and James went with their hoes to get the weeds that the plows failed to get.

The burning heat of the summer sun proved to be too much for the uncle, who was now past sixty years of age.

Over-Exertion in the intense heat produced a condition that the family physician could not control; And in just one week, the end came, and this good uncle passed to his reward.

This event brought great sorrow to all in the home and to many others who had learned to honor and trust him, as they saw him grow rich in this world's goods, in trusting neighbors and true friends, and in those graces that mark the true man, as, day by day, he measures up, more and more, to "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

The weeks that followed were weeks of anxiety and of strange movements as those who were to be responsible for the closing of the estate took charge, directing the sale of personal property, the distribution of realty interests and the adjustment of family affairs.

As Ted and Lizzie were now old enough and far enough advanced to attend the university, "Auntie" decided to move to town where she could be with them and help them take advantage of opportunities there and finish their education, take James and Ellen along to attend the public school, leave Solon

EVENING SHADES

and John to find homes for themselves elsewhere, and the farm home in the care of a renter.

This stay in town lasted only one year, so far as "Aunt Lou", James and Ellen were concerned. These three returned to the farm the next year.

Ted and Lizzie remained in town and continued their studies at the University; Lizzie preparing herself to teach, and Ted studying with a purpose to enter the ministry, which he did, after completing his course at the University, at Westminster College and at McCormick Seminary, Chicago.

James and Ellen were left with the aunt on the farm until she could have time to get the affairs of the farm and home in a more settled state.

As the older ones were now gone, duties more numerous and of more weight and responsibility began to devolve upon the two smaller ones. James was to haul corn and do many tasks that properly

ONE OF FOUR

belong to a man. In his attempt to provide feed to carry the stock through a very severe winter, he contracted a very severe case of rheumatism that required several years to out-grow.

This condition added much to the unpleasantness and difficulties of the heavy tasks. Being only a small boy of twelve years, and having the responsibility of caring for quite a drove of stock, getting the feed from the fields and meadows, milking the cows and looking after things generally, during the severe winter weather, we would naturally and reasonably suppose that he would encounter many serious problems and many great difficulties.

Since Ted was in school, in town, and could be at the farm home only over Sunday and very rarely a day in the week, all assistance that he could render was just a slight lift in passing, and this occurred, so it seemed to James, only once in a great while.

EVENING SHADES

Many were the trips that James made to town, a distance of twelve miles, with wagon loads of wheat that were loaded with extreme difficulty and hauled on a wagon that gave continual warning of a possible great calamity, as it began to cry with its load and a tire slipped to one side, giving to a wheel the appearance of a rundown heel and an air of rebellion, as its pitiful cry increased.

One day as he was descending a long hill, with a wagon load of wheat, he heard a ringing sound like a metal hoop bounding on the rocks, and glancing around to see what it was, he saw a wagon tire that seemed to be in a rapid run to get ahead of him. Supposing it to be from the hand of a mischievous boy, or from the wagon of some one who was driving behind him, he did not bring his wagon to a quick stop.

But upon looking back and seeing no other wagon near and no boy on the hill, he brought his team and wagon to

ONE . OF FOUR

a standstill, and, upon investigation, discovered that the tire was from one of the rear wheels of his own wagon.

He began to realize, now, that he was facing a very serious problem.

The wagon and its load must be lifted, the wheel taken off, and a job of work that would be sufficient to try the patience of any one other than a blacksmith, was to be done.

What could he do with it?

He could think of only one thing that would be at all appropriate for a boy of his age to do, under such circumstances, - just cry. So dividing the time, to give to each coat sleeve its portion, he placed them, one at a time, to his eyes to serve as a termination for the on-rushing flood.

It was not long, however, until the re-assuring voice of Ted, who was coming on to town, on his return to school, rang in his ears with "Hello! what is your trouble?" At the sound of this voice the

flood ceased, and James, with his timely and efficient help, was soon on his way again, rejoicing that he was still alive and unhurt.

In due time the wagon was unloaded and loaded again, with goods that had been purchased for use on the farm, and all were ready for the return trip.

The carriage, with "Auntie" started from town about sun-down, leaving James to follow with the team and wagon, at a distance that grew greater as, with the light running carriage and the incentive of the home stretch, the little road team increased their speed, and, before the left and lonely driver of the wagon team, the night came on and all leading lights went out.

The horses, tired from having drawn the heavy load of wheat to town, and now feeling the weight of the wagon and its lighter burden equally as much as they had felt the heavy load in the morning, moved lazily, coming occasionally, to a

ONE OF FOUR

sudden stop , as they faced a foe of their fancy in the darkness before them , thus arousing James from a half-slumber to quick action , as he grasped the seat to save himself from falling from it .

With that sense of weariness , almost over-powering , was mingled a sense of dread and danger that kept him , in a measure at least , alive to the world , as he moved on in the darkness , reducing the number of miles between himself and home , not with rapidity entirely to his satisfaction .

When within about one mile of home the wagon came to a sudden stop that landed him down in the front end of the wagon body upon his knees - which attitude he had , many times , thought of assuming when the team halted and hesitated to go on in the darkness - but as this was an involuntary assuming he decided to rise to his feet and endeavor to ascertain the cause of the sudden stop .

This he could not do without alighting

from the wagon , as it was now so intensely dark that he could not even see the horses .

he started to climb down over the front wheel and , feeling in the darkness , he discovered that , if he landed outside of the wheel , he would land inside of the field ; as the wheel was fast in the lock of the fence .

The tired horses , being just as ready to back as to go forward , were easily induced to back , and James , turning them to the right , cleared the fence , and was soon on his way again , happy to be alive and so near home .

he made the most of his knowledge of the trend of the narrow lane through the farm and soon arrived at the farm lot with his small load of goods , safely landed , and a great load of responsibility lifted from his glad and trembling heart .

The " uncle John " being the legally appointed guardian , and seeing how the

ONE OF FOUR

responsibilities were growing to be entirely too heavy for children of their ages, had come to the conclusion that James and Ellen should be placed where there were stronger men and women to do the heavy work. So he took them to his own home, gave them a good rest, and allowed them to visit for several weeks with relatives on the father's side.

These visits were ended all too soon and James and Ellen returned to the guardian uncle's to be "placed" again.

They were placed one with each of two other uncles who were able and willing to care for them.

This meant, of course, another and sadder separation, as, for these two, it was the first time they had been separated and sent out alone; and there followed days, weeks and months of loneliness and longing for loved ones, that only the orphan can know.

At last these days were ended, and James and Ellen, now about grown, found

a home together again with the older sister and her husband—May and David.

This stay lasted about three years.

They then shifted, for a short time, to the home of J. W. helping with the work of farm enterprises, in which they enjoyed an interest.

Soon Ellen attained unto her majority, being loath to change her name, and meeting a young man who was bent on doing all he could to dissuade her from doing such a rash thing, she decided to act on his suggestion, married this young man who was glad to let her name stand just as it was. They moved to Kansas City, Mo. where they now have their home and have reared, almost to manhood and womanhood, six happy, healthy and interesting children.

James and J. W. continued their work together for two or three years until an impression that James had carried since childhood grew so strong that he announced his purpose to enter school

ONE OF FOUR

again and prepare himself for a mode of life and work that would bring to the hearts of some who have been favored with a good providence, a sense of their good fortunes—such as he never knew—and to the hearts of others, against whom all events seem to conspire to reduce and sadden, a sense of the presence of the divine hand in all things, leading those who will believe and trust, through the deepest and darkest shadow, to the end of the sad way, where all shadows lift, and the joy of a fadeless light drives them back for ever.

With this purpose James closed his business on the farm, said another good-by and went to college to prepare for the ministry.

This proved to be the last severing of the home relations of this little family of four, and the beginning of the years of drifting, in which many anxious days have been spent as each one of the four has thought of the problems and

EVENING SHADES

difficulties of the others - and also of those of little Thomas , who , because of his individual relationships in which the four had no share , had , in a measure , drifted from them in these relationships - and longed to see them and be able to lend a helping hand . And yet they have drifted , at times , so far apart that for many months some were even lost from the knowledge of the others .

Since , in the last twenty years , all attempts to get together have failed , one is left to wonder if it cannot be until the time to which the young mother looked forward , as she gave to the little ones the last look of love , and , with faltering voice and failing breath , said to the father , " Teach them the way : and tell them to meet mother where homes will not be broken up again , and sad partings are no more . "

And now as we look back over the shifting life of this world as we have known it , think of the rolling tide of

ONE OF FOUR

time and the whirl of passing events, rest our eyes on the landscape, dotted with the dwelling places of those we have known as they have come and gone, and see some of these homes filled again with happy souls, beaming with life, while others are dark and deserted, housing only imaginary ghosts of the past, we can still see the sunlight of this day falling with full force upon four happy homes, over which a few clouds have passed, but upon which the benign sunlight of Heaven has fallen and now rests; leaving, at this eveningtide, a blend of beauties and glories that are known only to those who can feel and appreciate fully, the touch of the Divine and the bounties that fall from "the windows of Heaven."

Had the events of life spoiled, for any one of these, the glories of this passing day, the story of this home-life could not have been told by the narrator. But "all is well that ends well."

EVENING SHADES

And now we close the door upon this four-fold home life with no disappointment for the reader. They are all able to enjoy, to-day, the glories of the eveningtides and the dawn of this day that reaches into the second half of a century of manifold life.

The events of the last twenty years have been enough, in each of these four lives, to fill many chapters. Events joyous, sad, humorous and full of interest.

To relate some of them would turn the light on much that is of interest in the real life of to-day and arouse many emotions. But we will leave them here, and await the time of the writer, who may, some day, review some of the many interesting incidents that have transpired in the last twenty years, note them, in their order, and drop them, too, from the point of his pen, upon the record of past events.

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